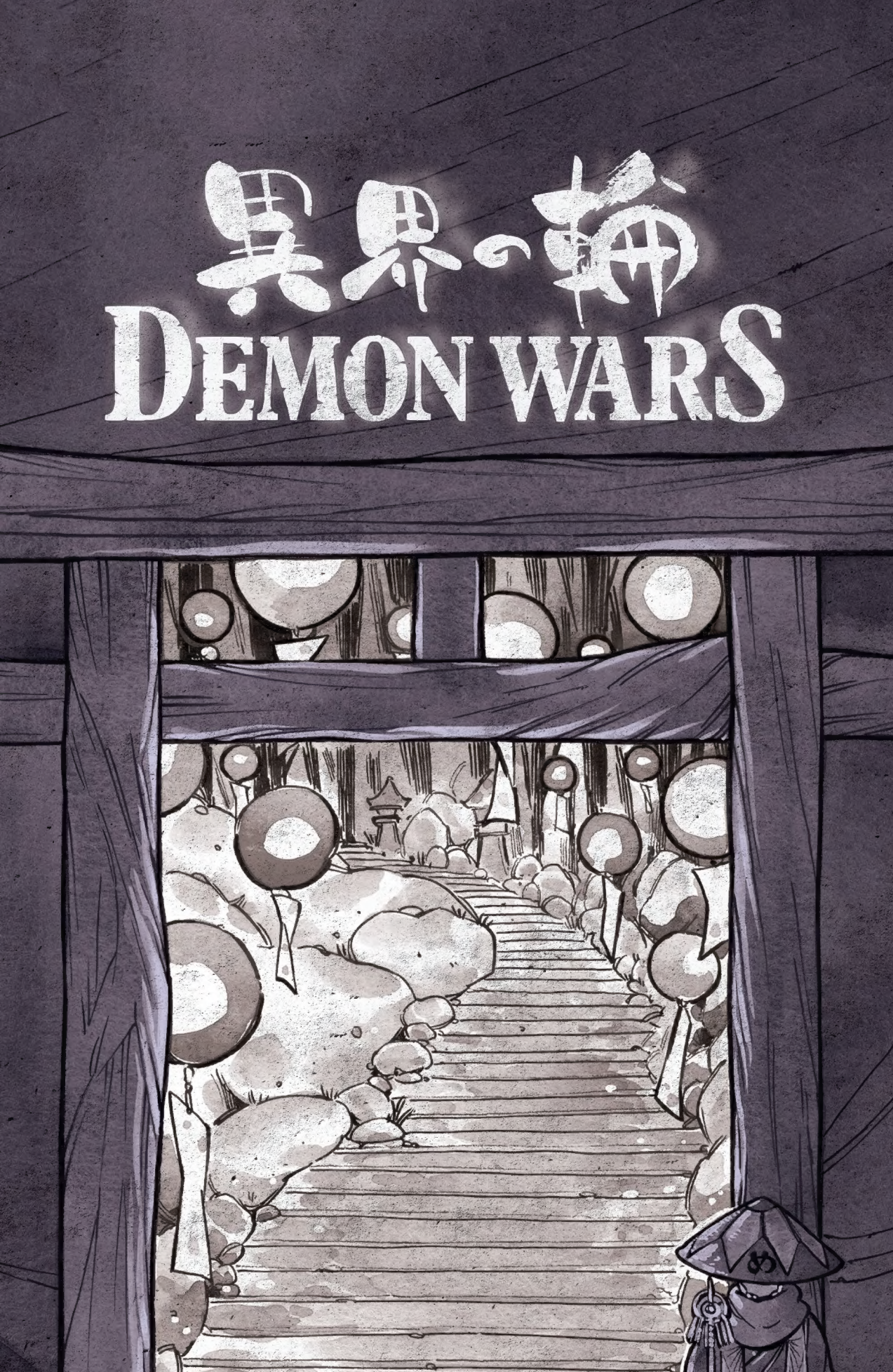
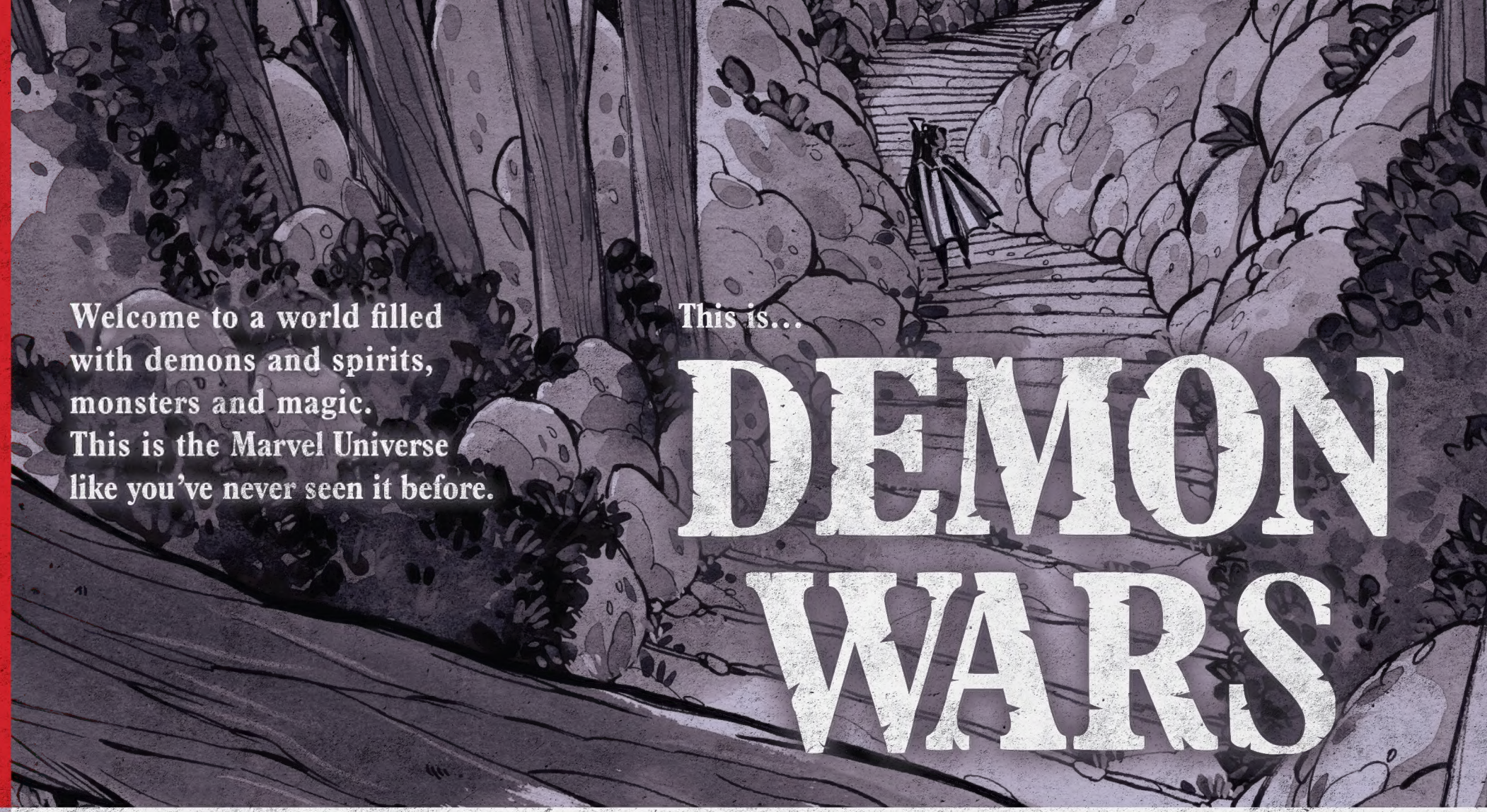
PEACH MOMOKO
異界の輪
MARVEL
DEMON WARS

異界の神
DEMON WARS



異界の魔



THE DEMON WARS SAGA

INTO THE
SPIRIT WORLD
PARTS 1-4

© 2023 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

Story & Art
PEACH MOMOKO

English Adaptation & Dialogue
ZACK DAVISSON

Letterer
VC's ARIANA MAHER

Cover Art
PEACH MOMOKO

Editor
LINDSEY COHICK

Collection Editor
JENNIFER GRÜNWALD

Assistant Editor
DANIEL KIRCHHOFFER

Assistant Managing Editor
MAIA LOY

Associate Manager, Talent Relations
LISA MONTALBANO

VP Production & Special Projects
JEFF YOUNGQUIST

SVP Print, Sales & Marketing
DAVID GABRIEL

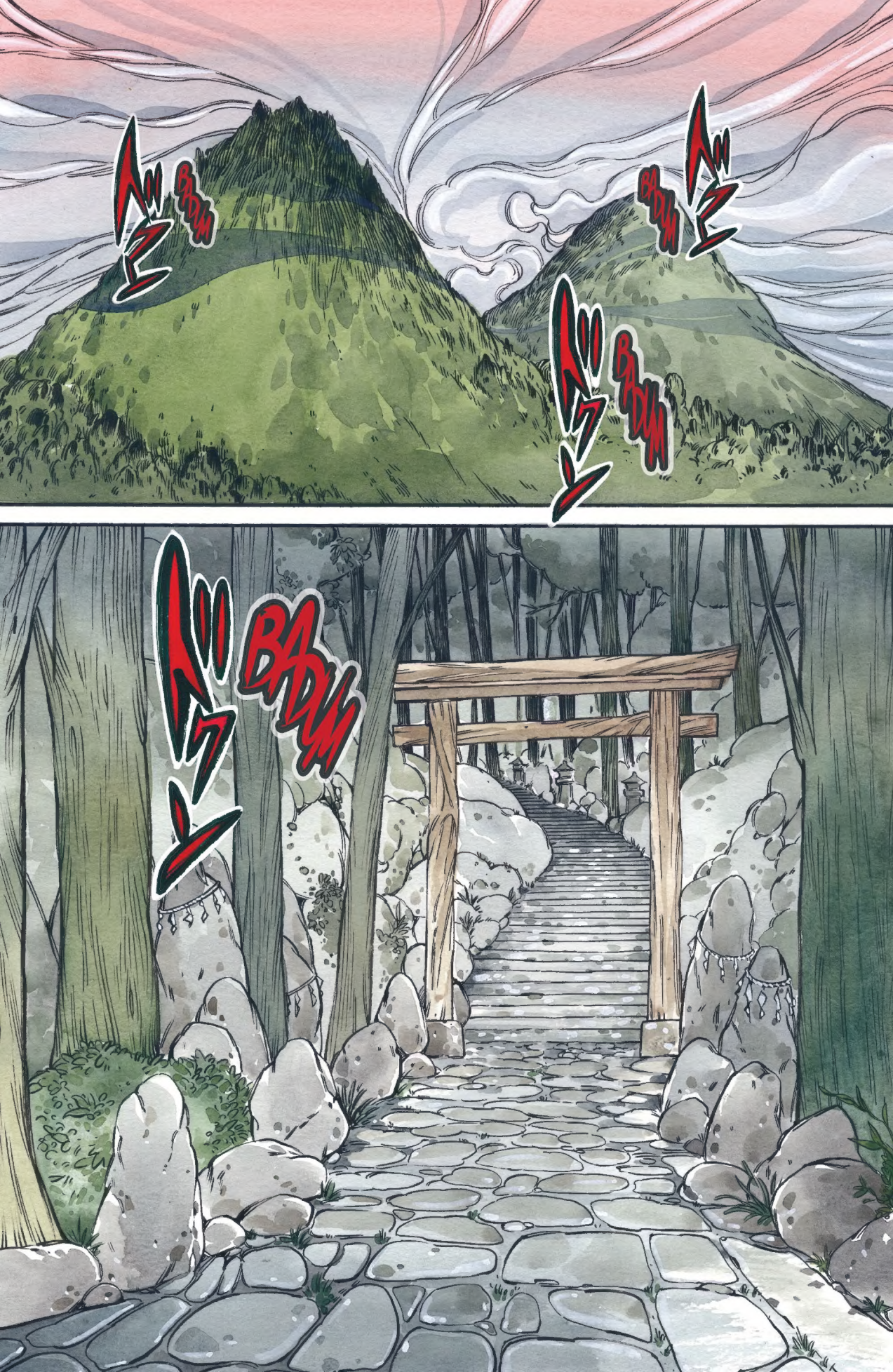
Book Designer
JAY BOWEN

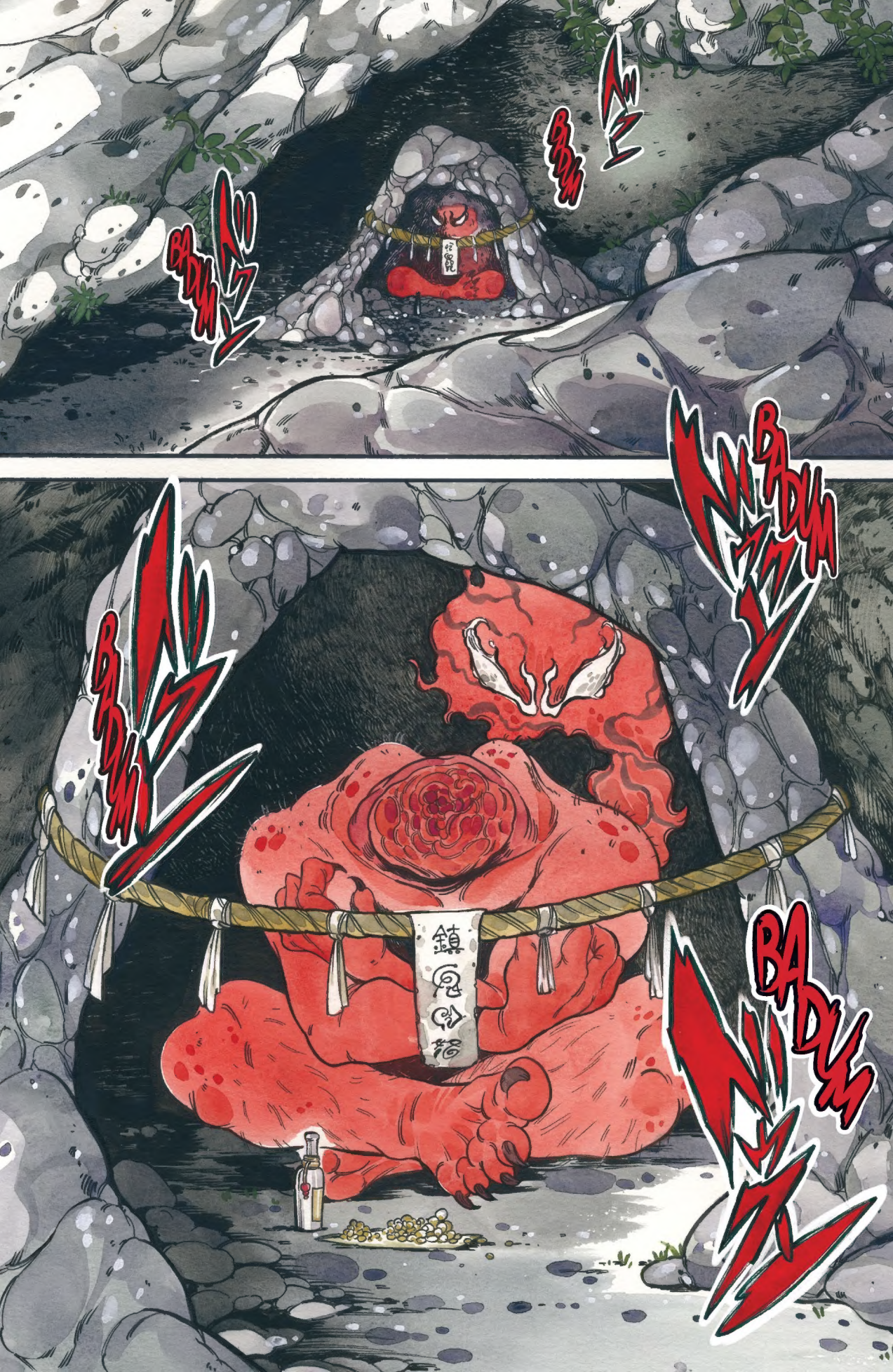
Sr. Manager, Digital
TIM SMITH 3

Digital Production
JASMINE ALVAREZ & RACHEL YOUNG

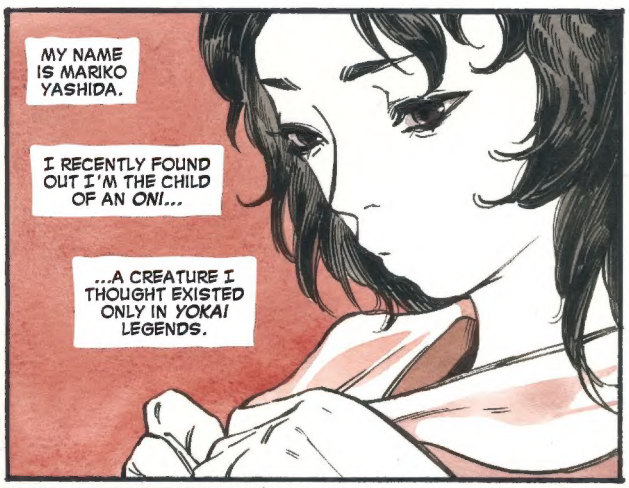
Editor in Chief
C.B. CEBULSKI

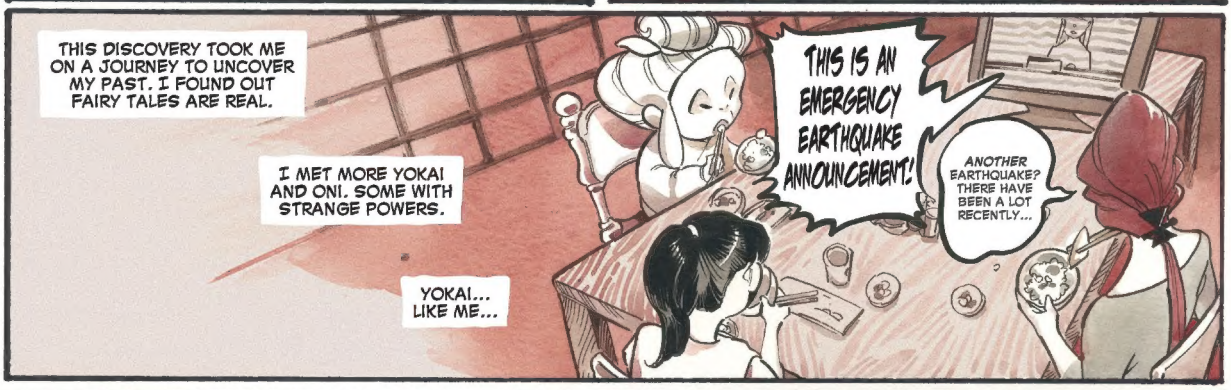
異界の軸
DEMON WARS
THE IRON SAMURAI


BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
BADUM


BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
BADUM
鎮魂の儀

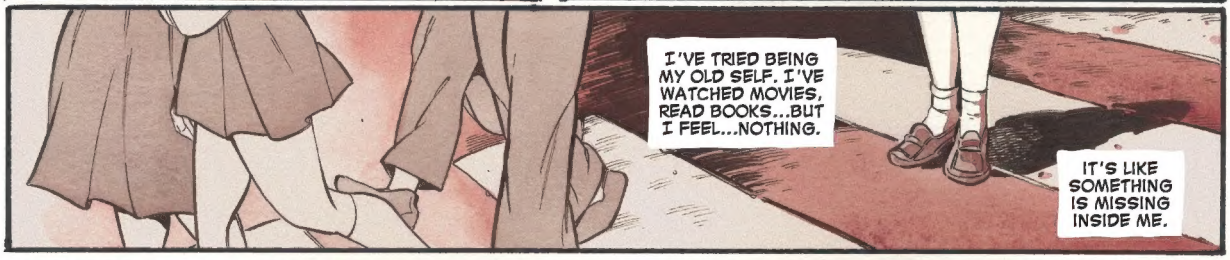
PI PI PI
PI PI PI

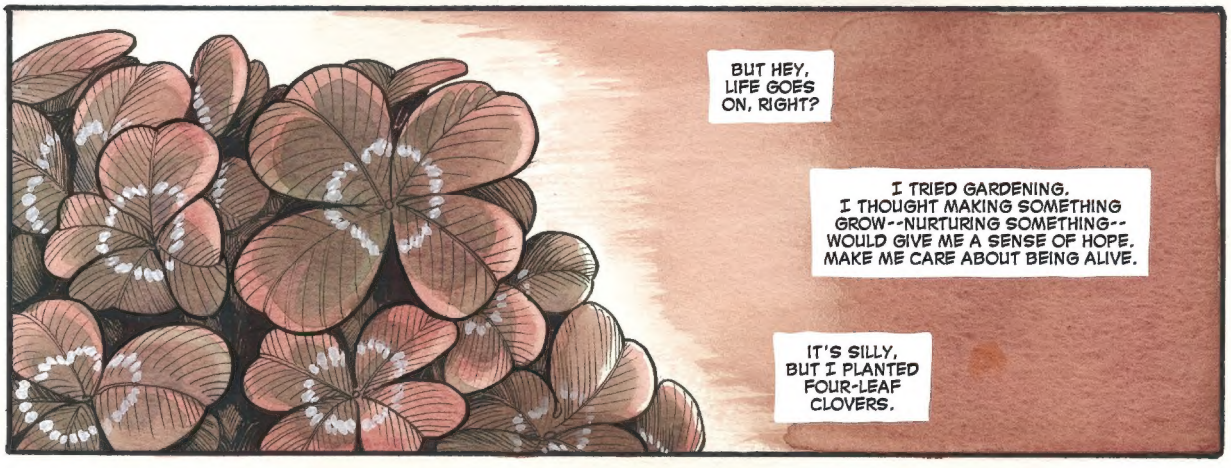

MY NAME IS MARIKO YASHIDA.
I RECENTLY FOUND OUT I'M THE CHILD OF AN ONI...
...A CREATURE I THOUGHT EXISTED ONLY IN YOKAI LEGENDS.

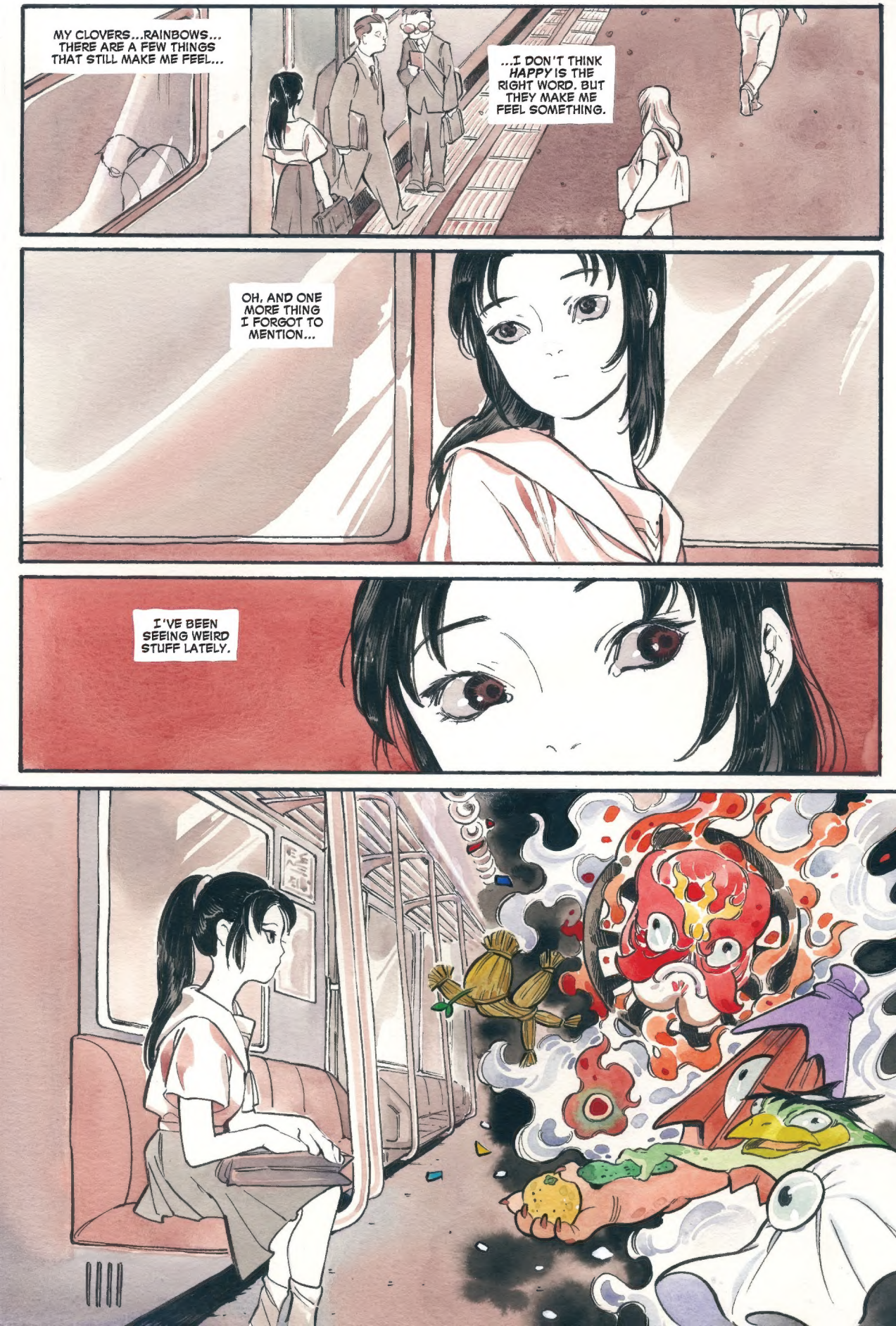

THIS DISCOVERY TOOK ME ON A JOURNEY TO UNCOVER MY PAST. I FOUND OUT FAIRY TALES ARE REAL.
I MET MORE YOKAI AND ONI. SOME WITH STRANGE POWERS.
YOKAI... LIKE ME...
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY EARTHQUAKE ANNOUNCEMENT!
ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE? THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT RECENTLY...

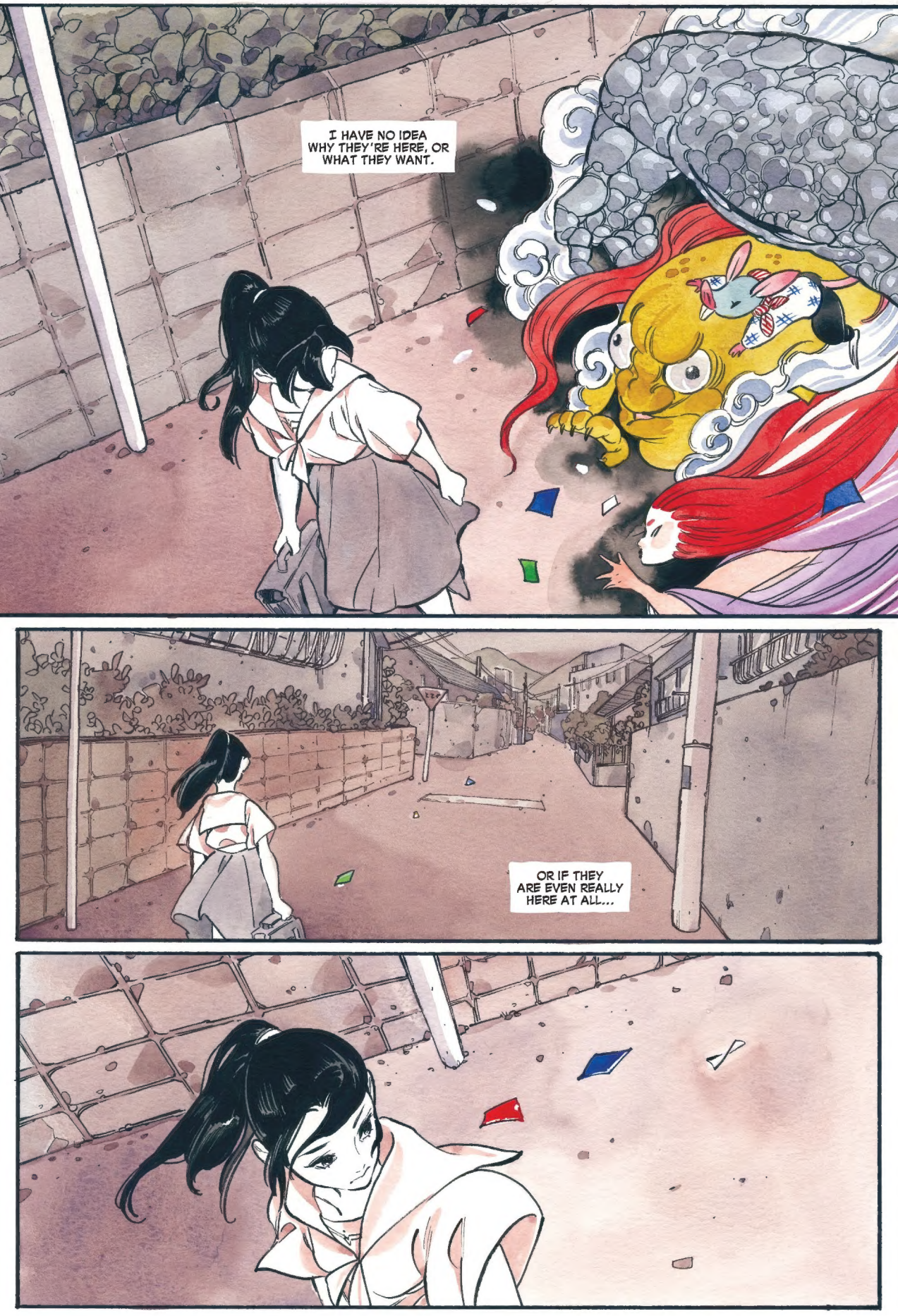
I'M OFF TO SCHOOL!

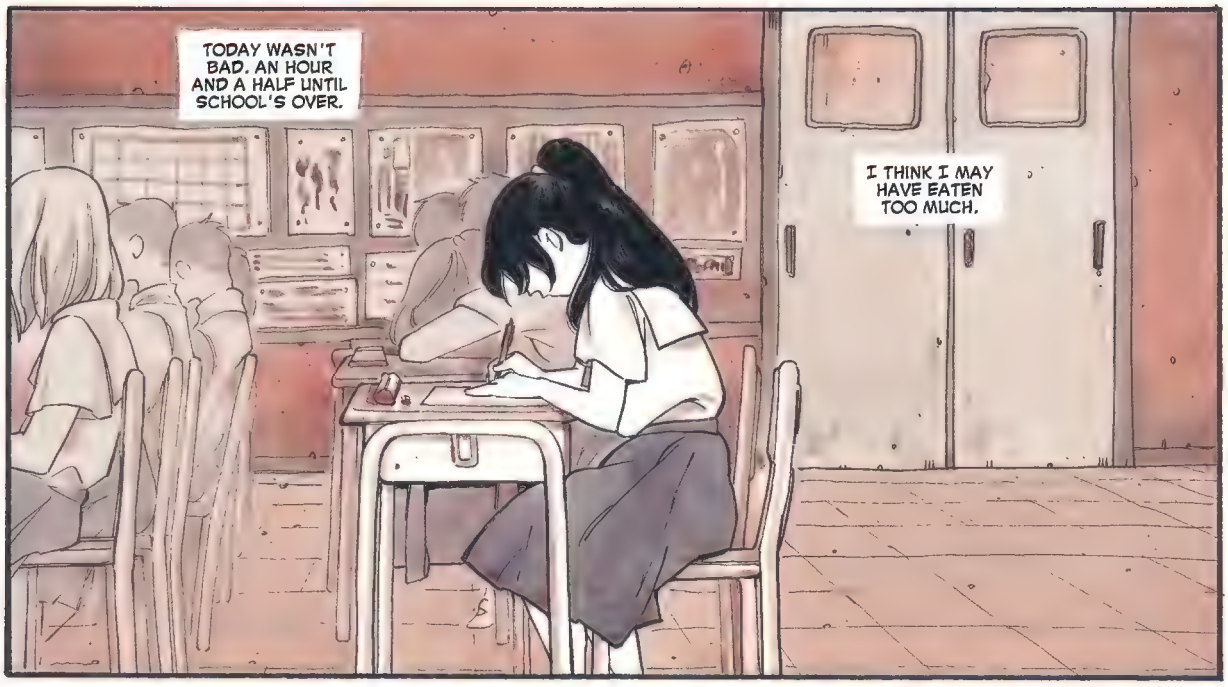
EVEN WEIRDER IS HOW EVERYONE'S ACTING SO NORMAL NOW. IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW MONTHS, BUT GRANNY AND OUR MAID, KUROKI--IT'S LIKE THEY'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENED.
LIKE OUR WHOLE WORLD HASN'T GONE TOPSY-TURVY. ALL THEY CARE ABOUT IS THE NEWS.
BUT I CAN'T FORGET...

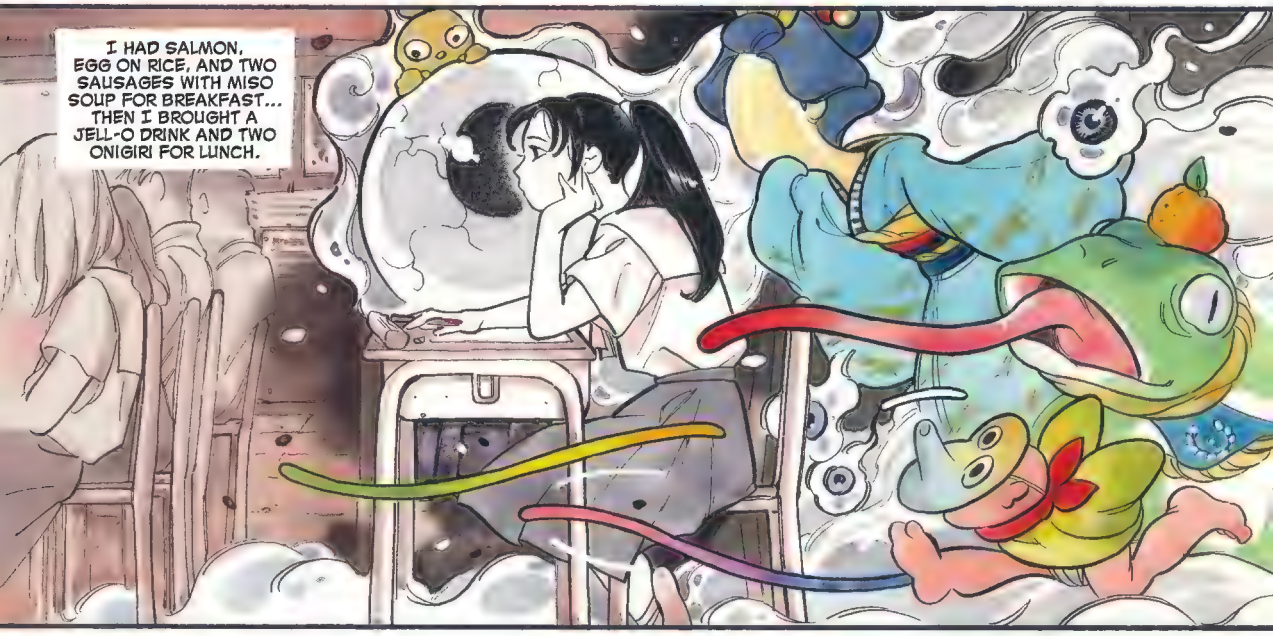

I'VE TRIED BEING MY OLD SELF. I'VE WATCHED MOVIES, READ BOOKS...BUT I FEEL...NOTHING.
IT'S LIKE SOMETHING IS MISSING INSIDE ME.


BUT HEY, LIFE GOES ON, RIGHT?
I TRIED GARDENING. I THOUGHT MAKING SOMETHING GROW--NURTURING SOMETHING--WOULD GIVE ME A SENSE OF HOPE. MAKE ME CARE ABOUT BEING ALIVE.
IT'S SILLY, BUT I PLANTED FOUR-LEAF CLOVERS.

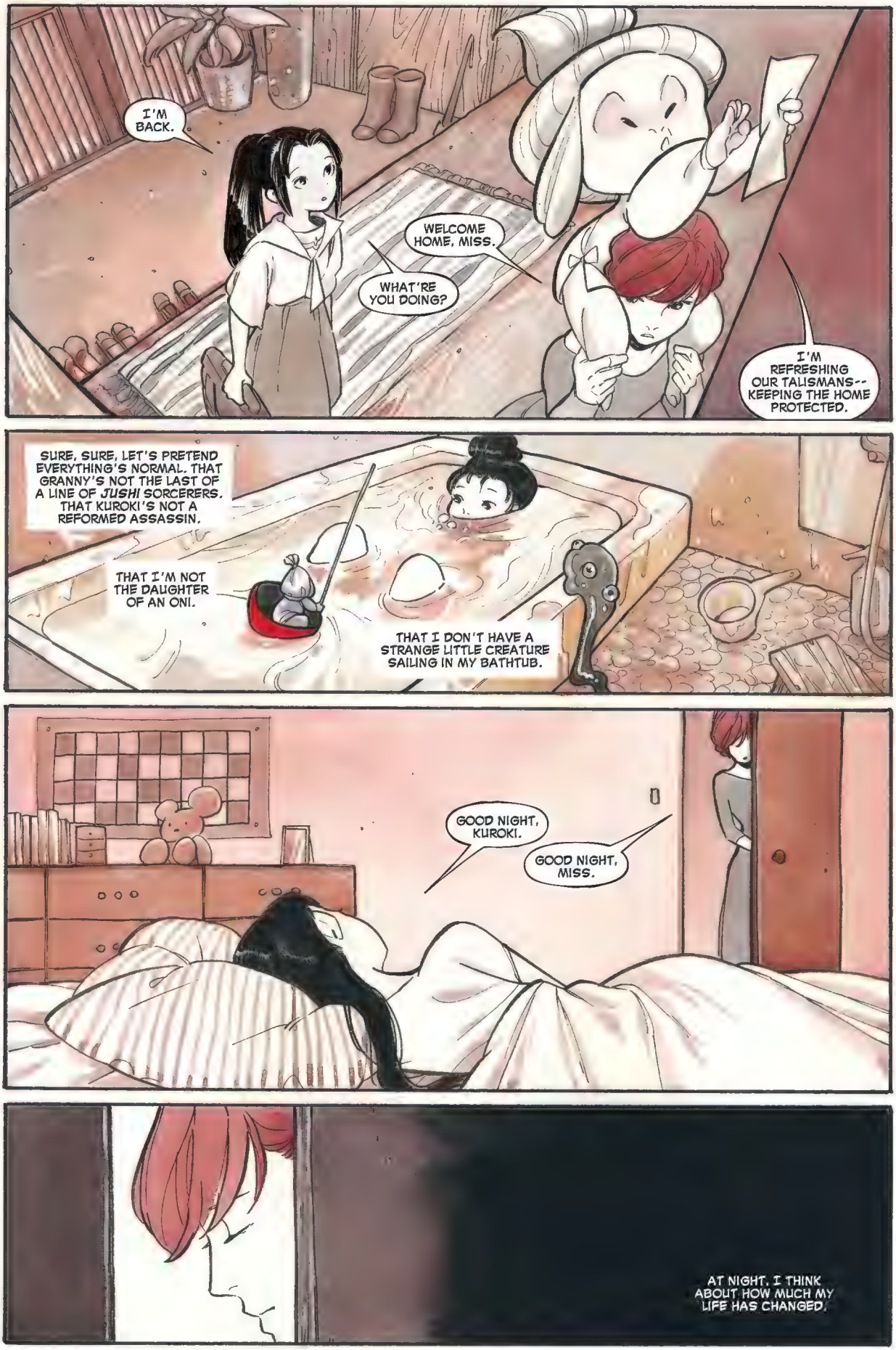

MY CLOVERS...RAINBOWS... THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT STILL MAKE ME FEEL...
...I DON'T THINK HAPPY IS THE RIGHT WORD. BUT THEY MAKE ME FEEL SOMETHING.
OH, AND ONE MORE THING I FORGOT TO MENTION...
I'VE BEEN SEEING WEIRD STUFF LATELY.

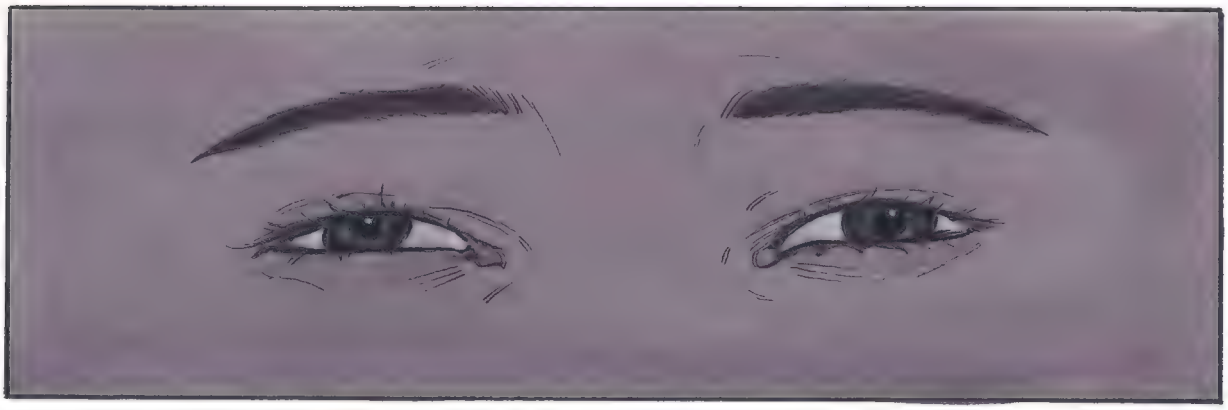

I HAVE NO IDEA WHY THEY'RE HERE, OR WHAT THEY WANT.
OR IF THEY ARE EVEN REALLY HERE AT ALL...


TODAY WASN'T BAD. AN HOUR AND A HALF UNTIL SCHOOL'S OVER.
I THINK I MAY HAVE EATEN TOO MUCH.


I HAD SALMON, EGG ON RICE, AND TWO SAUSAGES WITH MISO SOUP FOR BREAKFAST... THEN I BROUGHT A JELL-O DRINK AND TWO ONIGIRI FOR LUNCH.

I WONDER WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
THE SUMMER SKY IS SO BEAUTIFUL.


I'M BACK.
WELCOME HOME, MISS.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
I'M REFRESHING OUR TALISMANS-- KEEPING THE HOME PROTECTED.
SURE, SURE, LET'S PRETEND EVERYTHING'S NORMAL. THAT GRANNY'S NOT THE LAST OF A LINE OF *JUSHI* SORCERERS. THAT KUROKI'S NOT A REFORMED ASSASSIN.
THAT I'M NOT THE DAUGHTER OF AN ONI.
THAT I DON'T HAVE A STRANGE LITTLE CREATURE SAILING IN MY BATHTUB.
GOOD NIGHT, KUROKI.
GOOD NIGHT, MISS.
AT NIGHT, I THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH MY LIFE HAS CHANGED.



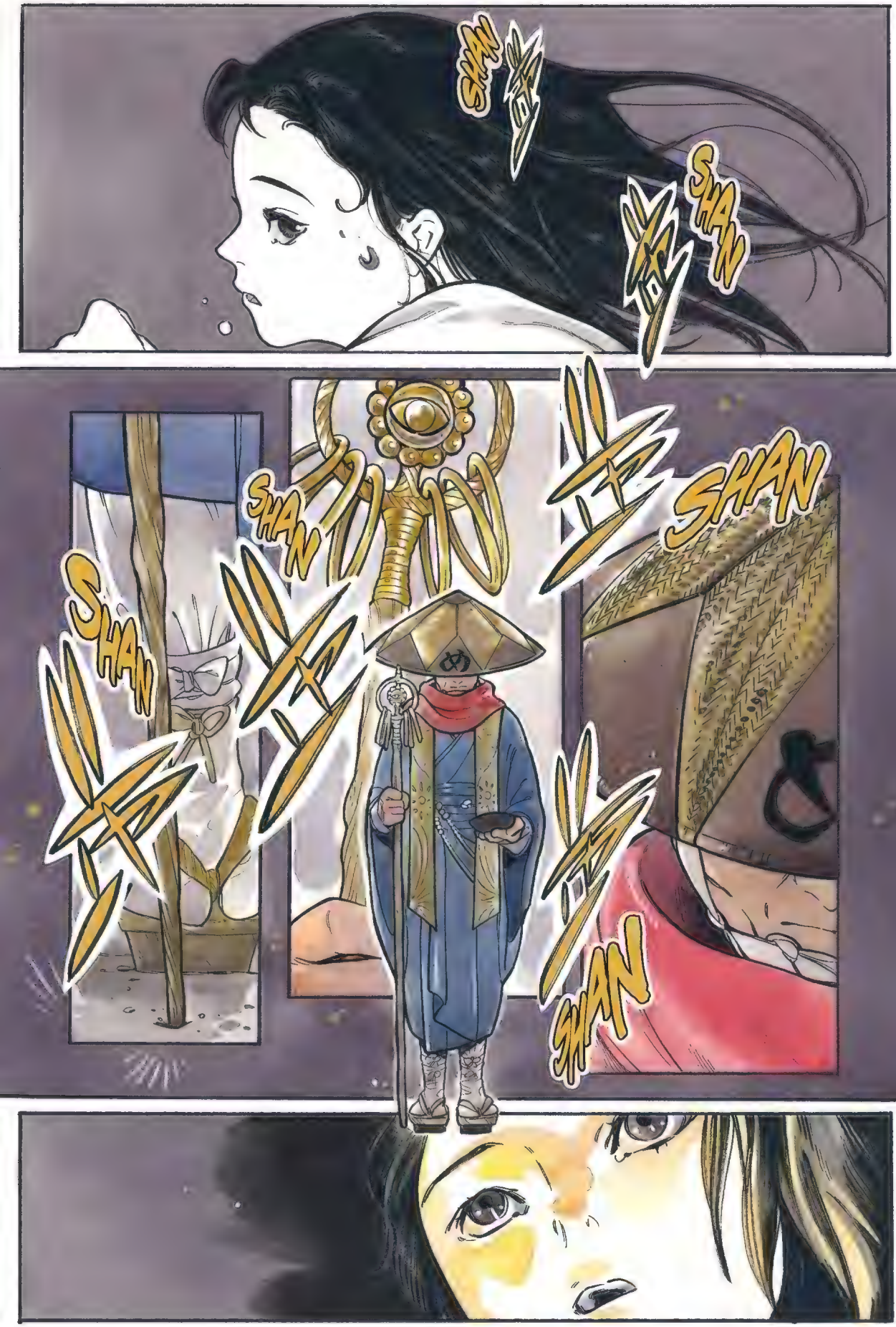
I USED TO HAVE ALL SORTS OF DREAMS. ABOUT MOM. ABOUT MY SISTER, OGIN.

IT FELT SO REAL BECAUSE IT *WAS* REAL. THEY WERE MEMORIES, NOT DREAMS.

BUT THIS...

...THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE.

WHAT AM I DOING...?
WHAT AM I RUNNING AFTER...?
WHAT DO I HOPE TO FIND...?


SHAN
SHAN
SHAN
SHAN
SHAN
SHAN

LOOKS LIKE THE CLOVERS WERE LUCKY, AFTER ALL.
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL...

IT'S WARM.
THE AIR SMELLS... DELICIOUS?

PRINCESS MARIKO!
MY NAME IS OAMI. WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!

COME ON, PRINCESS MARIKO! THIS WAY!
WHY DOES THIS FEEL SO FAMILIAR...?
WELCOME TO THE IKAI! TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH!
SORRY...

OH WOW! THIS SMELLS AMAZING! I LOVE FESTIVALS.
WHAT ARE YOU CELEBRATING?
YOU, PRINCESS MARIKO! THIS IS IN YOUR HONOR!

EARTHQUAKE! WE HAVE TO HURRY!
I GUESS I DON'T GET ANY OF THAT YUMMY FOOD?
NO TIME FOR THAT!
YOU WANT ME TO GO IN THERE?
DON'T WORRY. THIS IS JUST AN ENTRANCE. IT'S BIGGER ON THE INSIDE.

ARM THYSELF, DEMON'S DAUGHTER!
AND FACE THE CHALLENGE OF *BAKE-YORO!*
NOT NOW, YOU BIG DUMMY!
SHE'S LEGIT! SHE CROSSED THE THRESHOLD!
ONI'S BLOOD SHE MAY BE, BUT WE SHALL TEST IF SHE IS *TRULY* KIGANDOSHI'S DESCENDANT!
LET HER PROVE HER METTLE!
STAND BACK, OAMI.
I'VE GOT THIS.

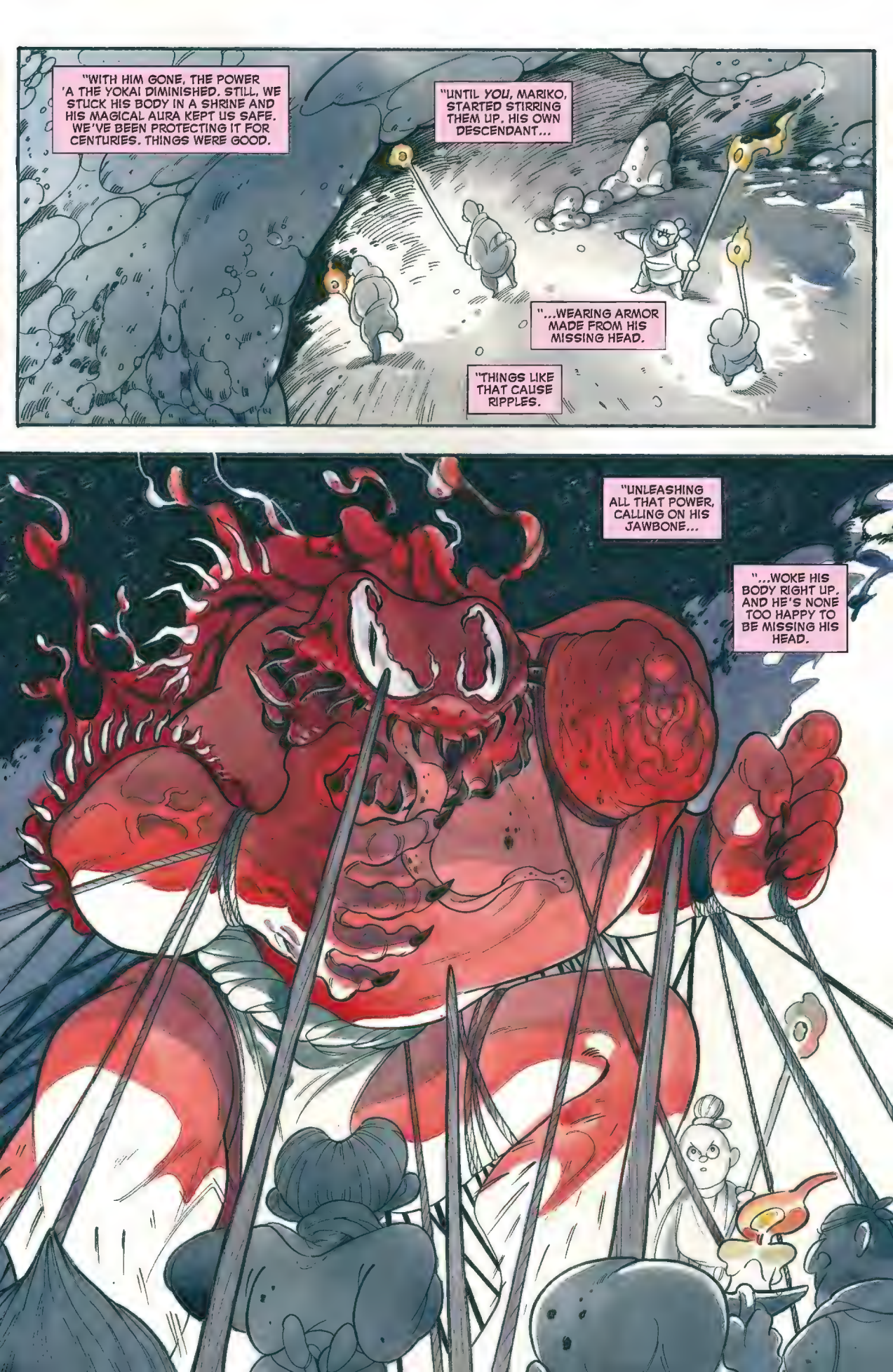
SLSSHH
A FAIR FEINT...
...BUT THOU SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT STEEL.
THANKS FOR THE TIP.
HWK
KANG

THOU HAST SPIRIT, GIRL. AND SOME SMALL MEASURE OF SKILL.
LET US SEE THY ANSWER TO THIS.
FARE THEE WELL, DEMON'S DAUGHTER.
FWOOSH
PRINCESS MARIKO!

FWWWWSSSS
ENOUGH, BAKE-YOROI.
KRAK
THOU WOULDST COME TO HER DEFENSE, HAYABUSA?
CANST THOU BE SURE THIS CHILD IS THE ONE WE SEEK?
A WORTHY QUESTION, MY OLD FRIEND.
YET YOU ARE ALWAYS TOO QUICK TO SEEK ANSWERS WITH YOUR SWORD. THERE ARE MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS THAN KILLING HER TO DETERMINE THAT.

HER EYES HOLD THE KEY.
YES, THERE IT IS.
IT'S FAINT, BUT DEEP WITHIN, I SEE THE RED GLINT THAT MARKS DESCENDANTS OF KIGANDOSHI.
YOU ARE THE ONE.
YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE BAKE-YOROI. HE'S GOTTEN A LITTLE RUSTY.
HMMPH...
MY APOLOGIES, MY LADY.
UMM...IT'S OKAY.
PHEW!

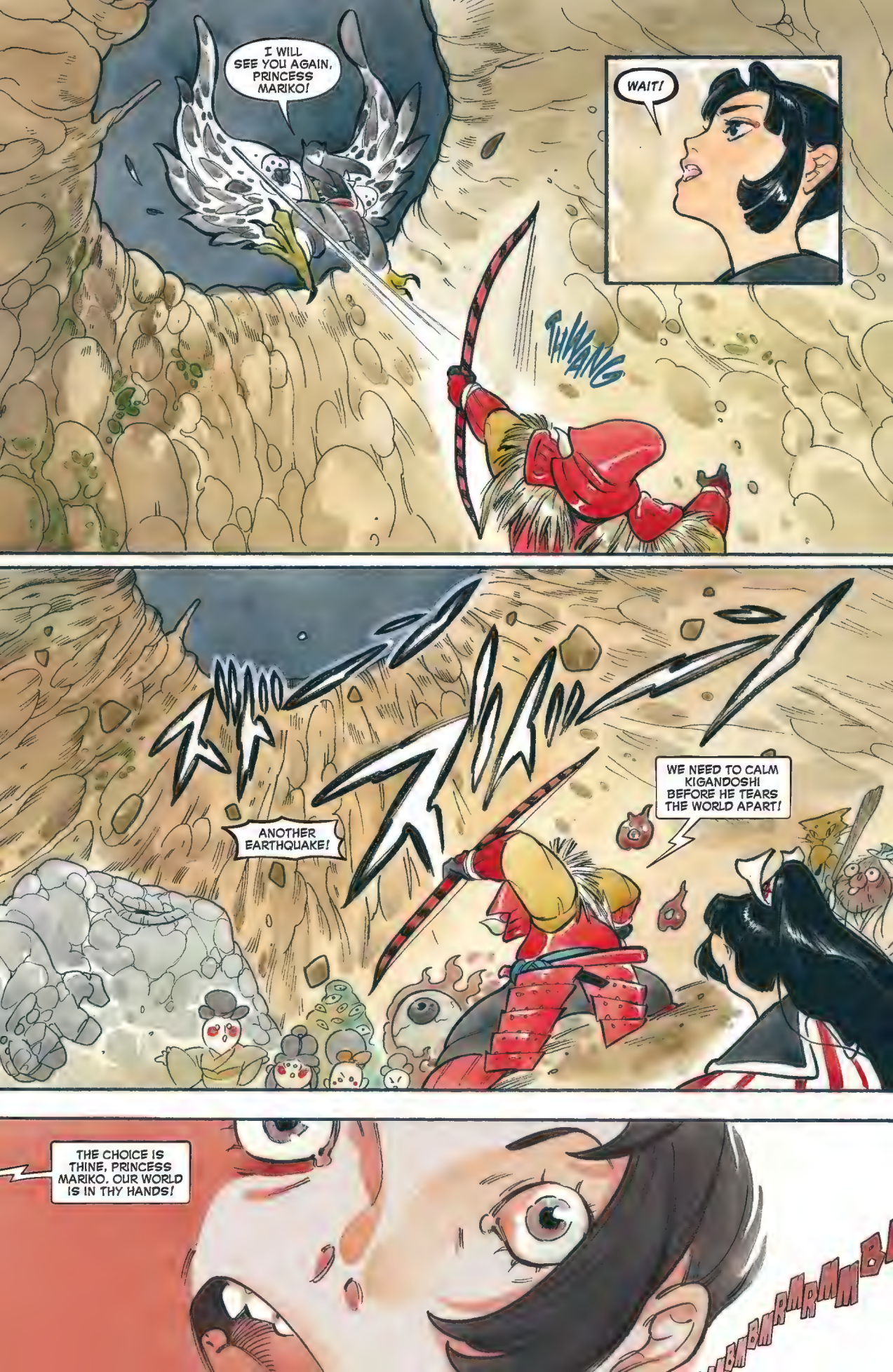
I FINALLY GET TO EAT!
NOW, WHO WANTS TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?
MNGH MNGH
SOUNDS LIKE MY CUE.
IBO-GAMI!
GLAD YA MADE IT, PRINCESS.
NOW THEN, OUR WORLD IS PROTECTED...
PASS ME A DANGO? THEY LOOK GREAT.
...BY THE GREAT ON! KIGANDOSHI.
FILL UP MY GLASS NOW. DON'T BE STINGY.
KIGANDOSHI WAS UP TO NO GOOD IN THE HUMAN WORLD. HE TICKED OFF THE WRONG PEOPLE...
THEY HUNTED HIM DOWN AND CUT OFF HIS HEAD.


"WITH HIM GONE, THE POWER 'A THE YOKAI DIMINISHED. STILL, WE STUCK HIS BODY IN A SHRINE AND HIS MAGICAL AURA KEPT US SAFE. WE'VE BEEN PROTECTING IT FOR CENTURIES. THINGS WERE GOOD.
"UNTIL *YOU*, MARIKO, STARTED STIRRING THEM UP. HIS OWN DESCENDANT...
"...WEARING ARMOR MADE FROM HIS MISSING HEAD.
"THINGS LIKE THAT CAUSE RIPPLES.
"UNLEASHING ALL THAT POWER, CALLING ON HIS JAWBONE...
"...WOKE HIS BODY RIGHT UP. AND HE'S NONE TOO HAPPY TO BE MISSING HIS HEAD.

THIS SCENT... IS SHE HERE...?
"ALL THAT THRASHING ROUND IS WHAT'S BEEN CAUSING THE EARTHQUAKES. ONLY NATURAL. IMAGINE IF YOU WOKE UP WITHOUT YOUR HEAD--YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT EITHER.
"WE FIGURE IF WE GIVE KIGANDOSHI HIS HEAD BACK, HE'LL CALM DOWN.
"AND MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, RESTORE OUR POWER AS WELL. LET US BE *TRUE* YOKAI AGAIN."
I MUST WARN THE OTHERS BEFORE THE HEAD IS RETURNED.

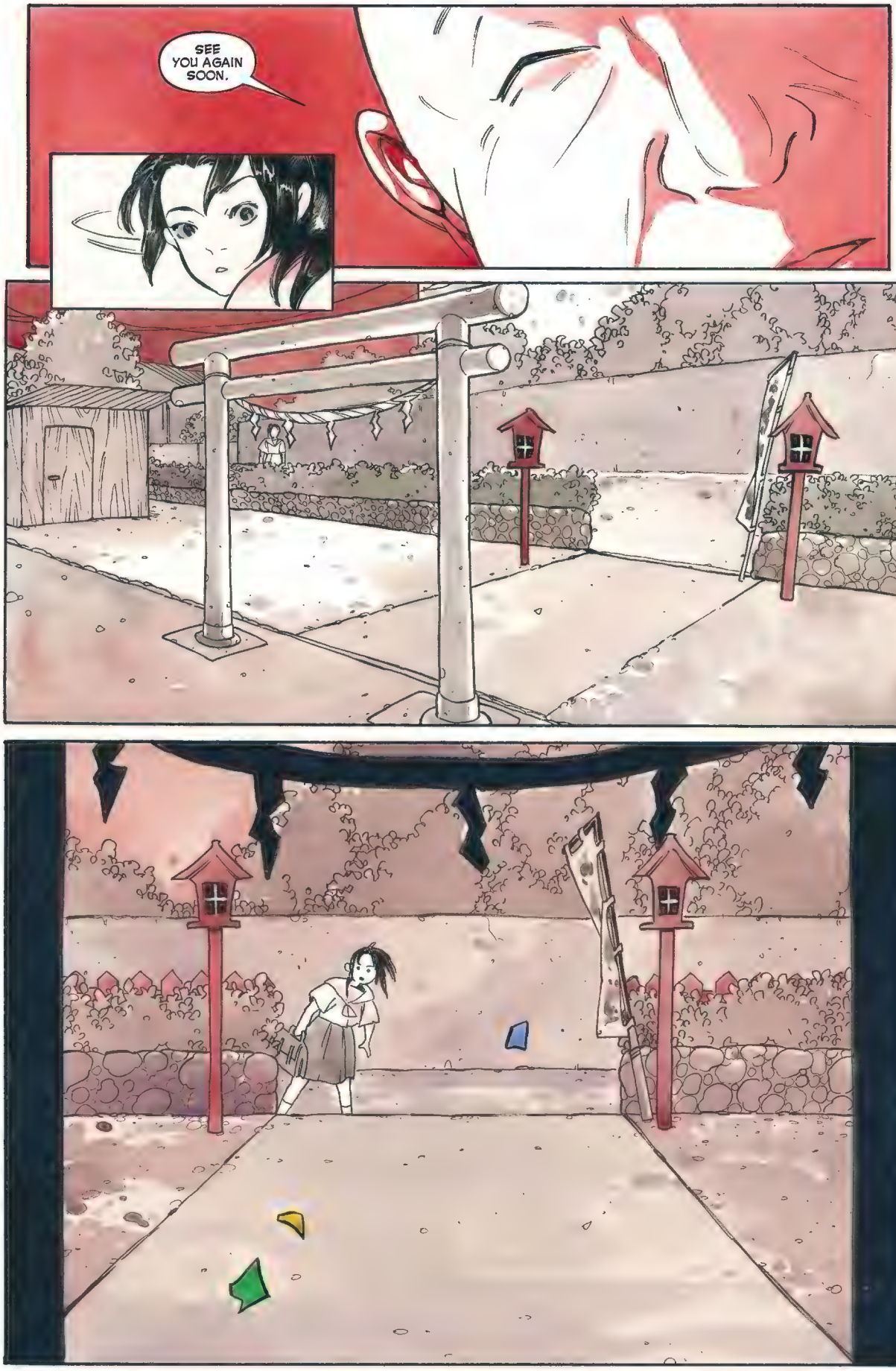
THAT'S WHY WE NEED YOU, PRINCESS MARIKO.
ONLY A DESCENDANT CAN BRING HIS HEAD BACK. BRING *US* BACK.
NOW, THIS CUP AIN'T GONNA REFILL ITSELF. WHO CAN--?
AND YET, IBO-GAMI...IF WE UNITE KIGANDOSHI WITH HIS HEAD...
...WHAT GUARANTEE DO WE HAVE THAT HE WILL NOT RAMPAGE AGAIN?
YAMATO AND HIS CLAN WORRY THAT REVIVING KIGANDOSHI WILL CAUSE GREATER TROUBLE--PUT HIM BEYOND OUR CONTROL.
HEADLESS, HE IS SUBDUED. WE CAN CALM HIM--RETURN HIM TO HIS SHRINE. HIS PRESENCE CAN AGAIN PROTECT US ALL.
BUT WHOLE? HE COULD END THE PEACE BETWEEN THE YOKAI AND HUMAN WORLD THAT HAS EXISTED SINCE HIS DEATH. DO NOT FORGET WHAT PUT HIM THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
YAMATO?
BRAZEN TENGU! I KNEW THOU WERE A SPY!
THOU WOULDST CONSPIRE WITH YAMATO AND HIS ILK! THOU DOST FEAR YOKAI RESTORED TO OUR RIGHTFUL GLORY!
THOU WOULDST KEEP US COWERING IN THE SHADOWS.

NOW, NOW... YAMATO IS NOT OUR ENEMY-- EVEN IF WE DISAGREE.
WE BELIEVE KIGANDOSHI SHOULD BE FREE.
WE DON'T WANT HIM IN PAIN ANYMORE.
AND WE WANT TO BE OURSELVES AGAIN, TO WALK IN THE WORLD INSTEAD OF HIDING HERE.
PRINCESS MARIKO! ONLY YOU CAN HELP KIGANDOSHI!
PRINCESS MARIKO, AS THE DESCENDANT, THE DECISION IS YOURS. TRUST THAT I WILL BE ON YOUR SIDE, WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE.
BUT REMEMBER, EITHER CHOICE WILL HAVE CONSEQUENCES. PREPARE FOR THEM.
DAMN TRAITOR!

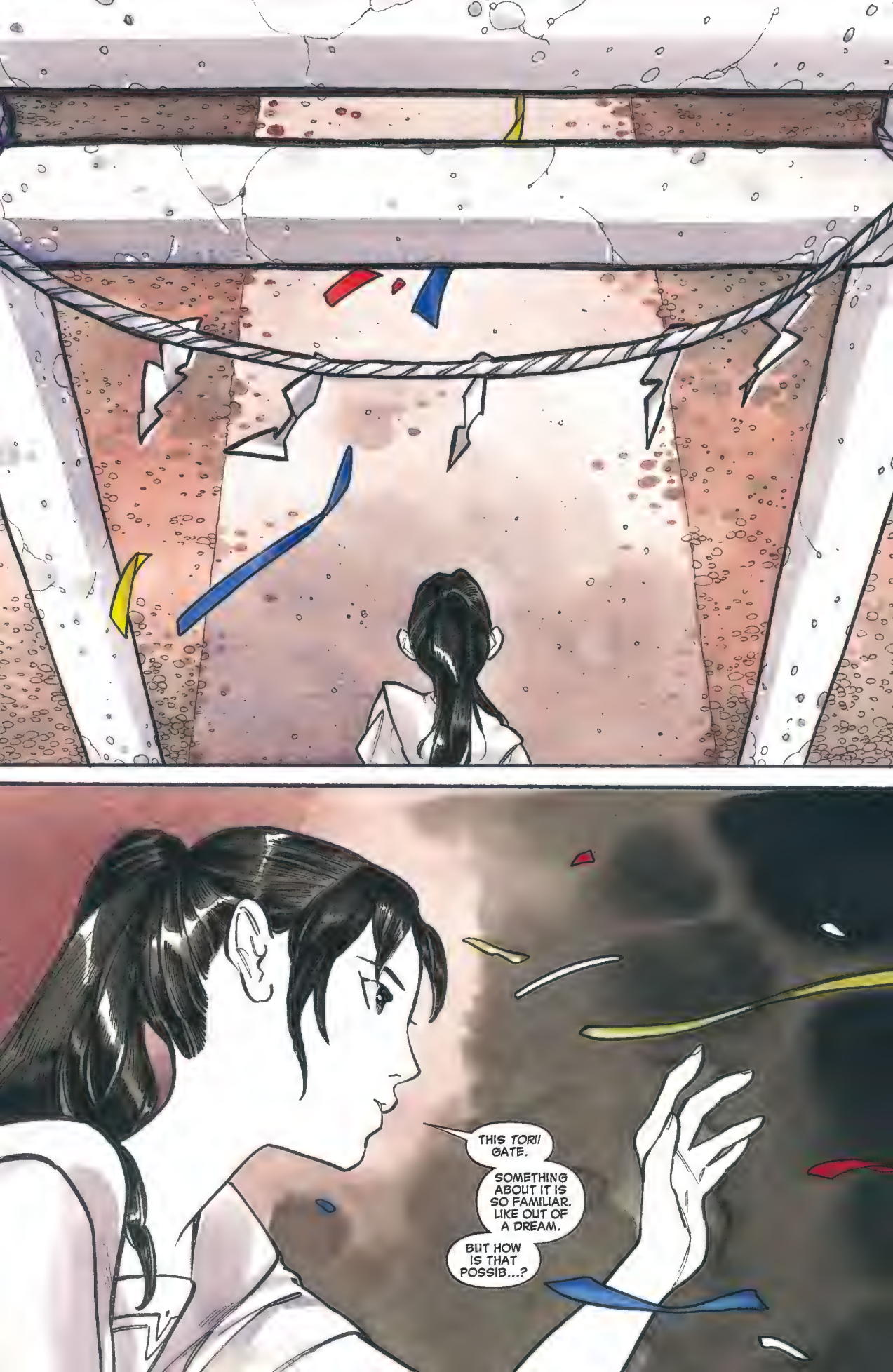

I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN, PRINCESS MARIKO!
WAIT!
TWANG
ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE!
WE NEED TO CALM KIGANDOSHI BEFORE HE TEARS THE WORLD APART!
THE CHOICE IS THINE, PRINCESS MARIKO. OUR WORLD IS IN THY HANDS!

...A DREAM...?
OH SHOOT! THIS IS THE LAST STOP!
IT'S SO LATE...

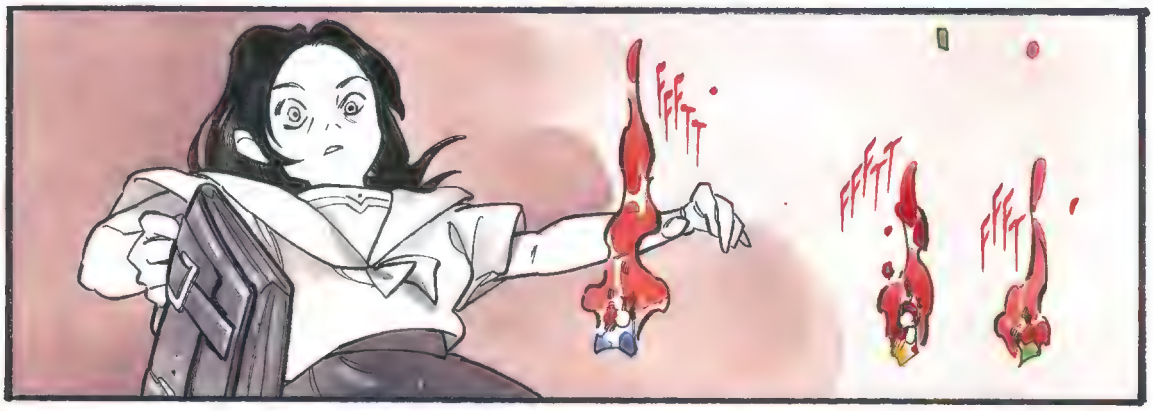
I KNOW I'VE SEEN THAT GUY'S FACE SOMEWHERE BEFORE...

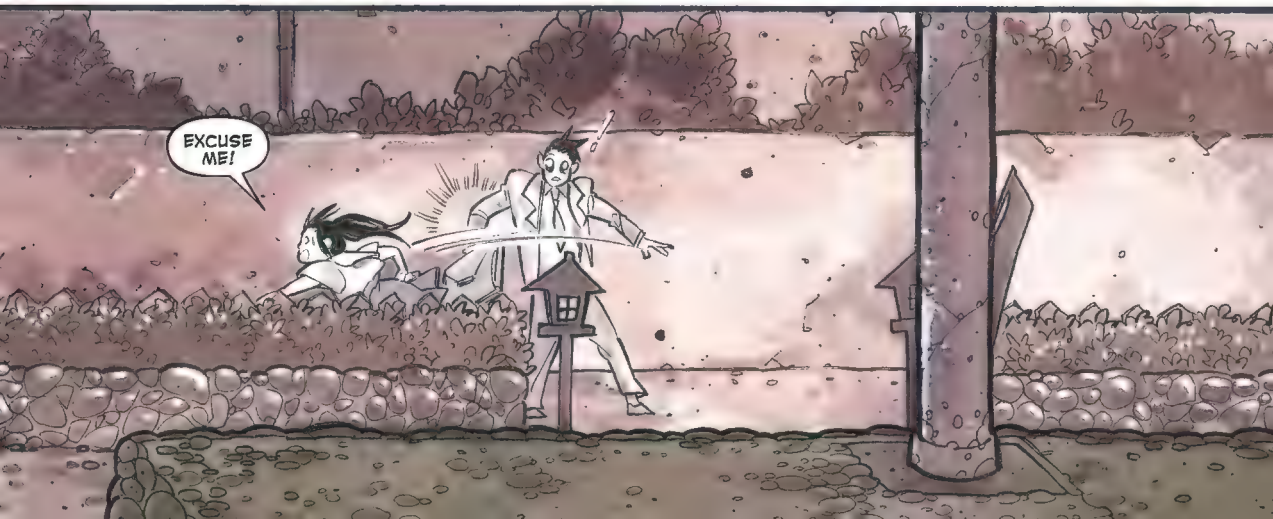

SEE YOU AGAIN SOON.

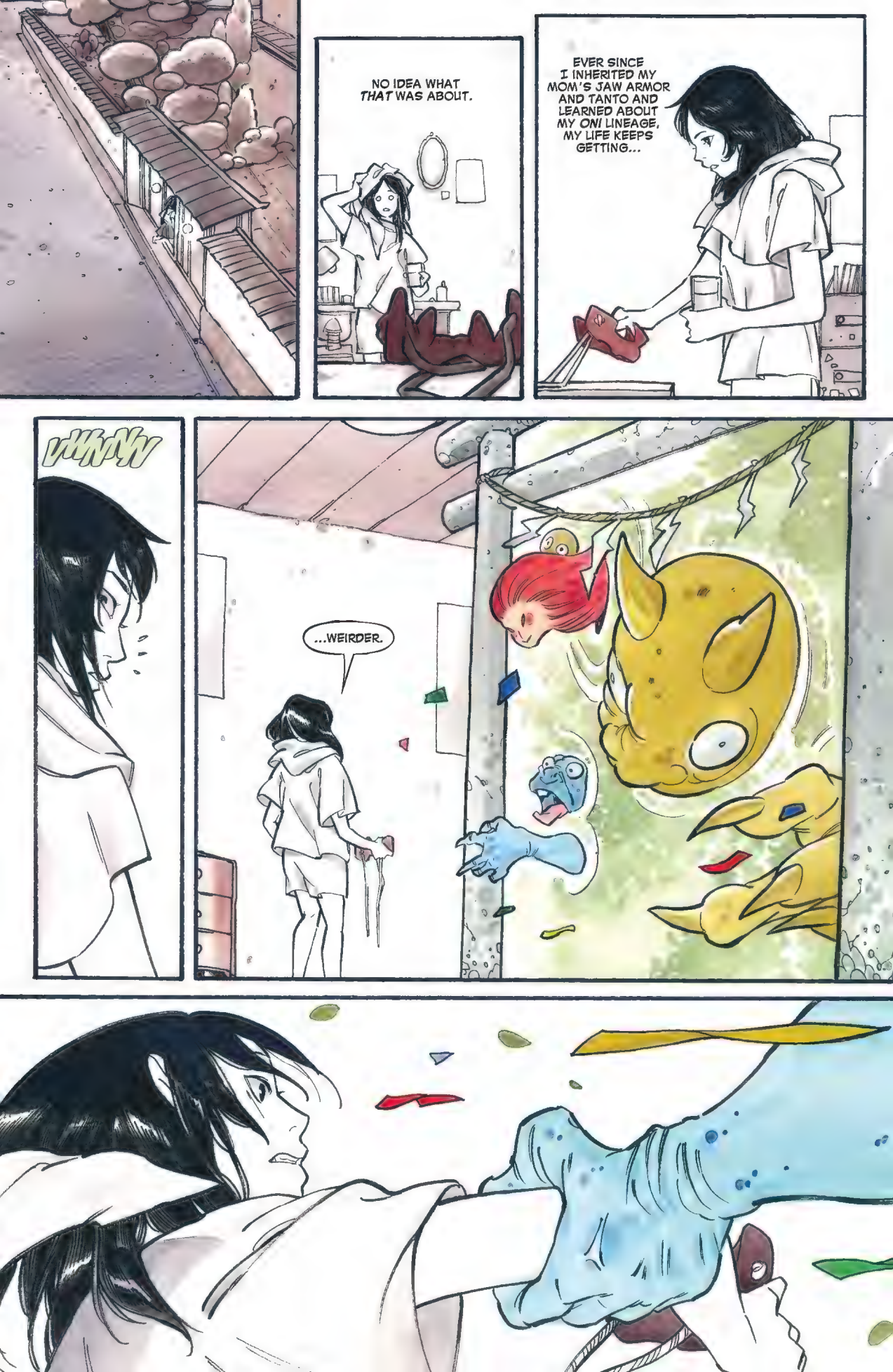
異界の神
DEMON WARS
SHIELD OF JUSTICE

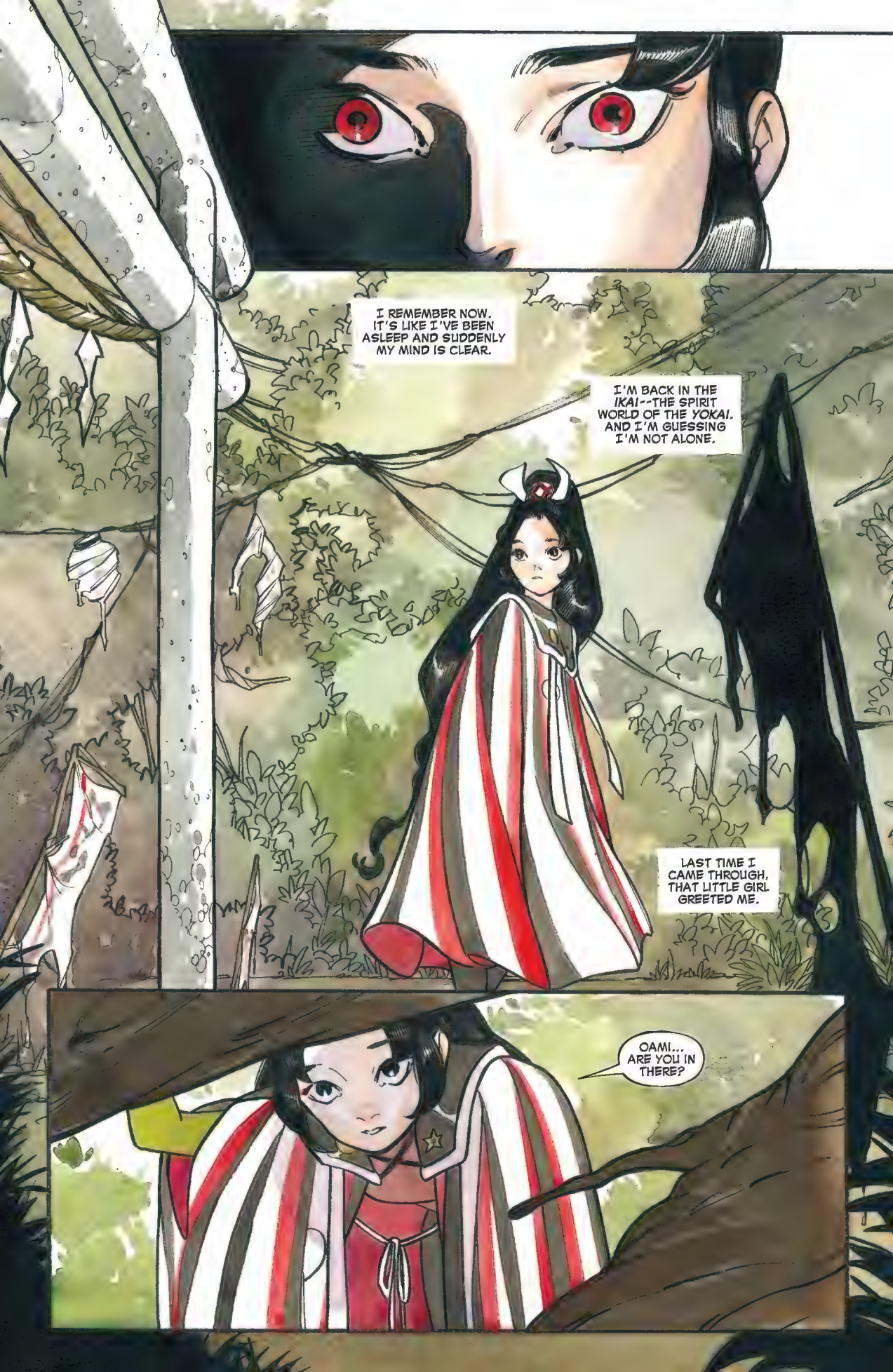

THIS *TORII* GATE.
SOMETHING ABOUT IT IS SO FAMILIAR. LIKE OUT OF A DREAM.
BUT HOW IS THAT POSSIB...?

LEAVE
LEAVE
LEAVE
LEAVE


FFFTT
FFFTT
FFFT


EXCUSE ME!


NO IDEA WHAT *THAT* WAS ABOUT.
EVER SINCE I INHERITED MY MOM'S JAW ARMOR AND TANTO AND LEARNED ABOUT MY *ONI* LINEAGE, MY LIFE KEEPS GETTING...
VVVVVV
...WEIRDER.


I REMEMBER NOW. IT'S LIKE I'VE BEEN ASLEEP AND SUDDENLY MY MIND IS CLEAR.
I'M BACK IN THE IKAI--THE SPIRIT WORLD OF THE YOKAI. AND I'M GUESSING I'M NOT ALONE.
LAST TIME I CAME THROUGH, THAT LITTLE GIRL GREETED ME.
OAMI... ARE YOU IN THERE?

ANYONE HOME?
OH! EXCUSE ME!
HELLOOO... IT'S ME, MARIKO.
OAMI? BAKE-YOROI?
HAYABUSA?
I DON'T THINK ANYONE IS HERE.

FWK FWK
ﾃﾞﾃﾞﾃﾞ
BIG CAT!
BUMP

I'M GUESSING YOU'RE THE MYSTERIOUS YAMATO EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT?
BAKE-YOROI WARNED ME ABOUT YOU.
NEKOMATA AND I OFFER A CHOICE. HAND OVER THE *HANPO* JAW ARMOR HIDING UNDER YOUR CLOAK.
LEAVE THE IKAI AND NEVER RETURN.
OR...

...IF YOU REFUSE...
STAND DOWN, YAMATO. YOU PROMISED A CHANCE TO RESOLVE THIS WITHOUT BLOODSHED.
COME, MY FRIEND. THERE IS A BETTER PATH.
MARIKO, CHILD. BAKE-YOROI AND HAYABUSA LAID A GREAT BURDEN UPON YOU.
THEY TOLD ME I MUST CHOOSE THE FATE OF THE IKAI.
AND I SAY THIS IS NOT YOUR CHOICE TO MAKE. "DEMON'S DAUGHTER," THEY CALLED YOU, BUT YOU ARE HUMAN. THIS IS THE YOKAI WORLD. YOU HAVE NO PLACE IN IT.
WE YOKAI WILL DETERMINE OUR OWN DESTINY. YOU ARE NOT WANTED. GO HOME.
BUT IBO-GAMI-SAMA SAID YOU NEEDED MY HELP WITH KIGANDOSHI...
WE'RE WASTING TIME!
SHHKK
I SAID STAND DOWN, YAMATO!

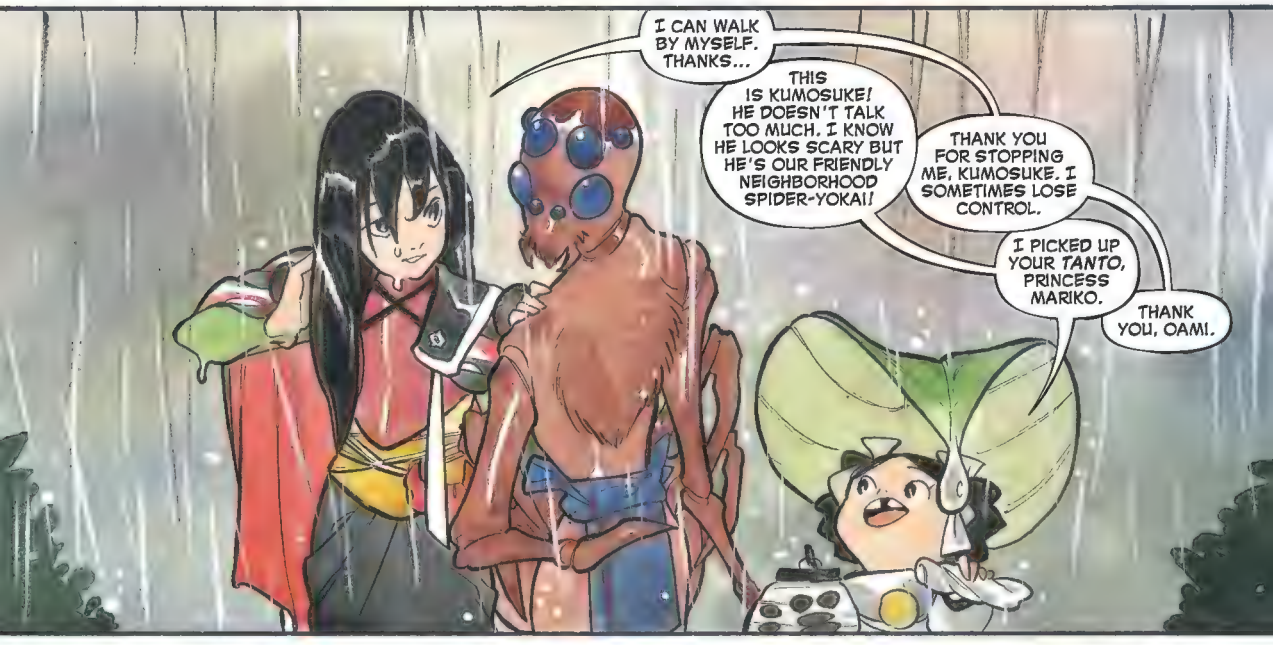
AND I SAY ENOUGH!
THAT'S NOT YAMATO.
!!
WHAT IS INSIDE HIM?
TCHK
MARIKO! WHILE YOU STILL CAN--
--GO BACK TO WHERE YOU'RE FROM!
WHERE I'M FROM...?

WH-WHERE... DID I...? WHO AM...?
SOMETHING'S WRONG.
OGIN
SWISH
TANG

NO!
PAKIN
THNK
STAND THEE DOWN, AOSHISHI NO YAMATO! NEKOMATA!
PRINNCESSSS--!

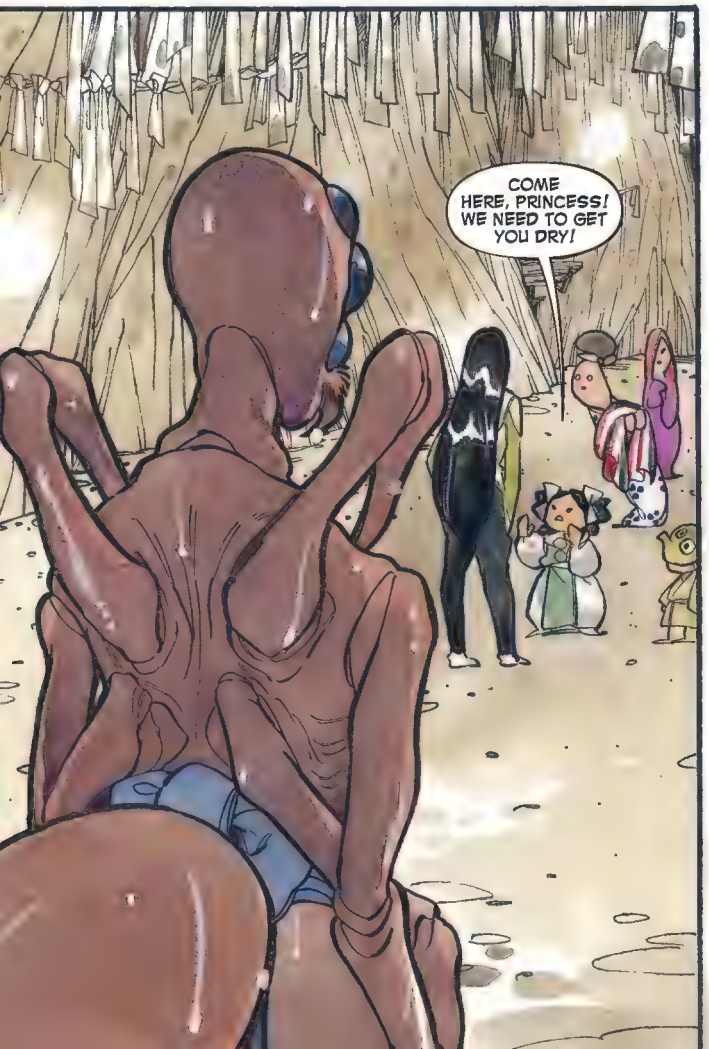
...MARIKO?
GWRAAAARRR!
THWIP
KUMOSUKE! TAKE OUR PRINCESS TO SAFETY.
I WILL DEAL WITH THESE USURPERS.

Unnn...


I CAN WALK BY MYSELF. THANKS...
THIS IS KUMOSUKE! HE DOESN'T TALK TOO MUCH. I KNOW HE LOOKS SCARY BUT HE'S OUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-YOKAI!
THANK YOU FOR STOPPING ME, KUMOSUKE. I SOMETIMES LOSE CONTROL.
I PICKED UP YOUR *TANTO*, PRINCESS MARIKO.
THANK YOU, OAMI.

THE THING THAT MAKES ME LOSE CONTROL...MY ONI SIDE...I SENSED IT IN YAMATO TOO. A RED THING...VIOLENT AND HUNGRY. IT WILL CONSUME HIM.
THERE'S SOMETHING *ROTTEN* IN THE IKAI.

I NEVER REALIZED HOW BEAUTIFUL THE INSIDES OF TREES WERE UNTIL I CAME HERE.
THOSE TALISMANS... THEY'RE THE SAME ONES GRANNY HANGS UP.


COME HERE, PRINCESS! WE NEED TO GET YOU DRY!

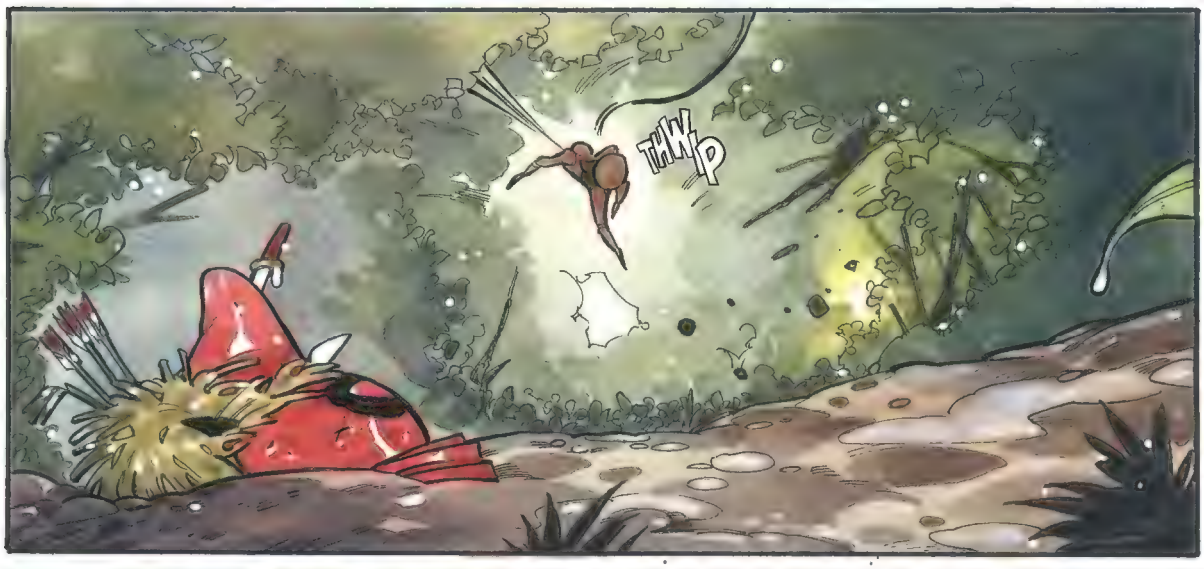
DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR BLADE.
THE MASTER BLACKSMITH WILL FIX IT BETTER THAN EVER.

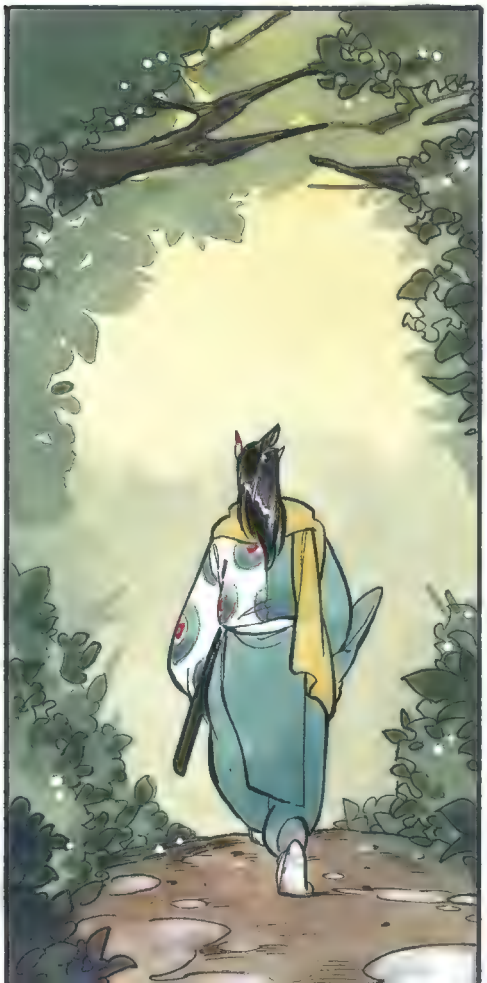
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, YAMATO? I DON'T KNOW YOU ANYMORE.
THAT ARMORED SLEEVE--THE KOTE--YOU RECEIVED FROM YOUR MASTER. WASN'T IT MEANT TO DEFEND YOKAI, NOT FIGHT THEM?
NOW LOOK AT US.
I TELL YOU THIS, YAMATO. YOUR BLOODLUST WILL BE YOUR UNDOING.
NO ONE WILL FOLLOW A LEADER WHO SLAUGHTERS HIS OWN KIND.

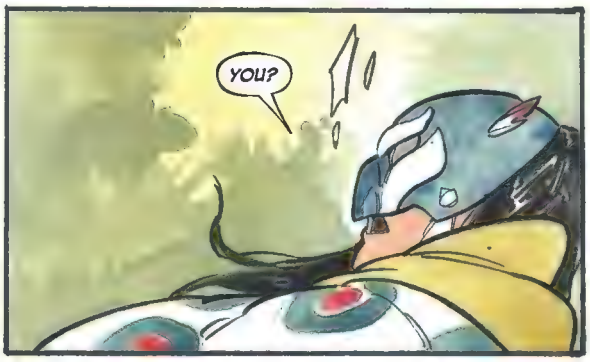
IF WE CANNOT TOLERATE DISCUSSION, IF WE BECOME *TYRANTS* WHO FORCE OUR WILL WITH SWORDS...
...WHO ARE WE SAVING?
I KNOW... I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO--
AND HOW EXACTLY DO YOU PLAN TO STOP THESE EARTHQUAKES WITHOUT THE JAWBONE FROM KIGANDOSHI'S HEAD?
FLIP

THE CAVE AIN'T GONNA HOLD!
RUN!
BRACE YOURSELVES. HE'S COMING!

WHERE'S YAMATO WHEN WE NEED HIM?

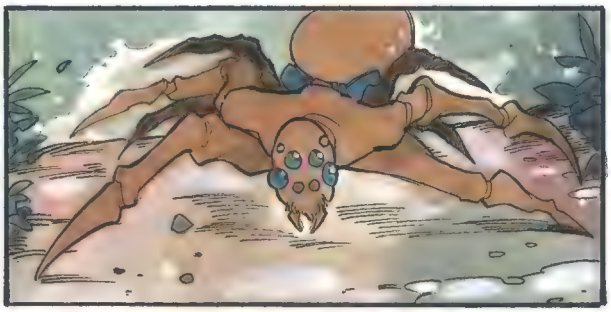

THWIP




YOU?

SHINK

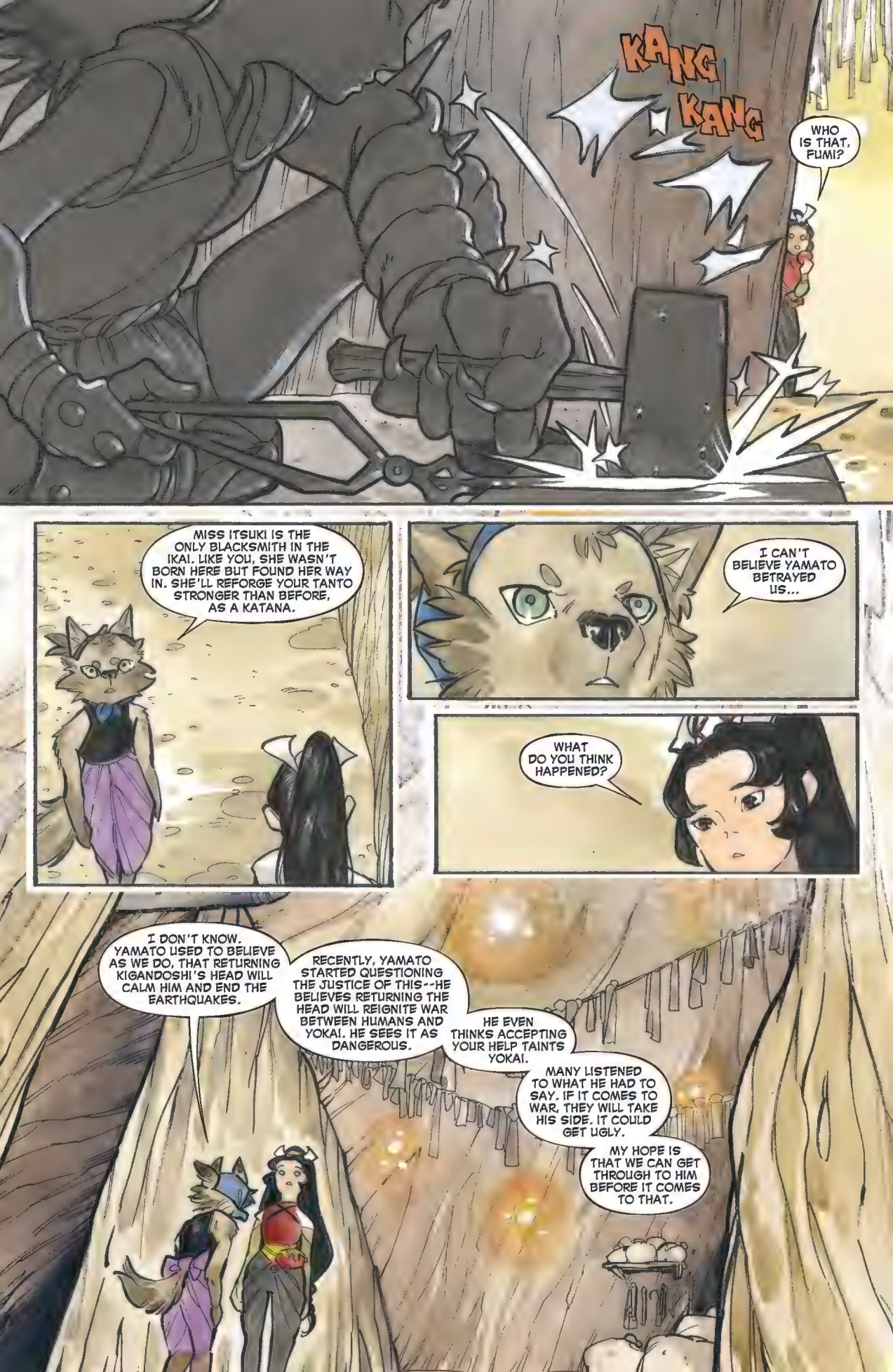
YOU TOO, KUMOSUKE?
I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED BY MORE BETRAYAL.



ANOTHER YOKAI BEGGING FOR HUMAN HELP.

DIMINISHING US ALL.
YAMATO, PLEASE!
PRINCESS MARIKO SAW SOMETHING INSIDE, POSSESSING YOU. THIS ISN'T WHO YOU ARE!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM!

TELL MARIKO THAT IF SHE SEEKS THE TRUTH...
...WE'LL BE WAITING AT MUTSUMATA NO IWA.
AT THE BASE OF KIRISAKI MOUNTAIN.

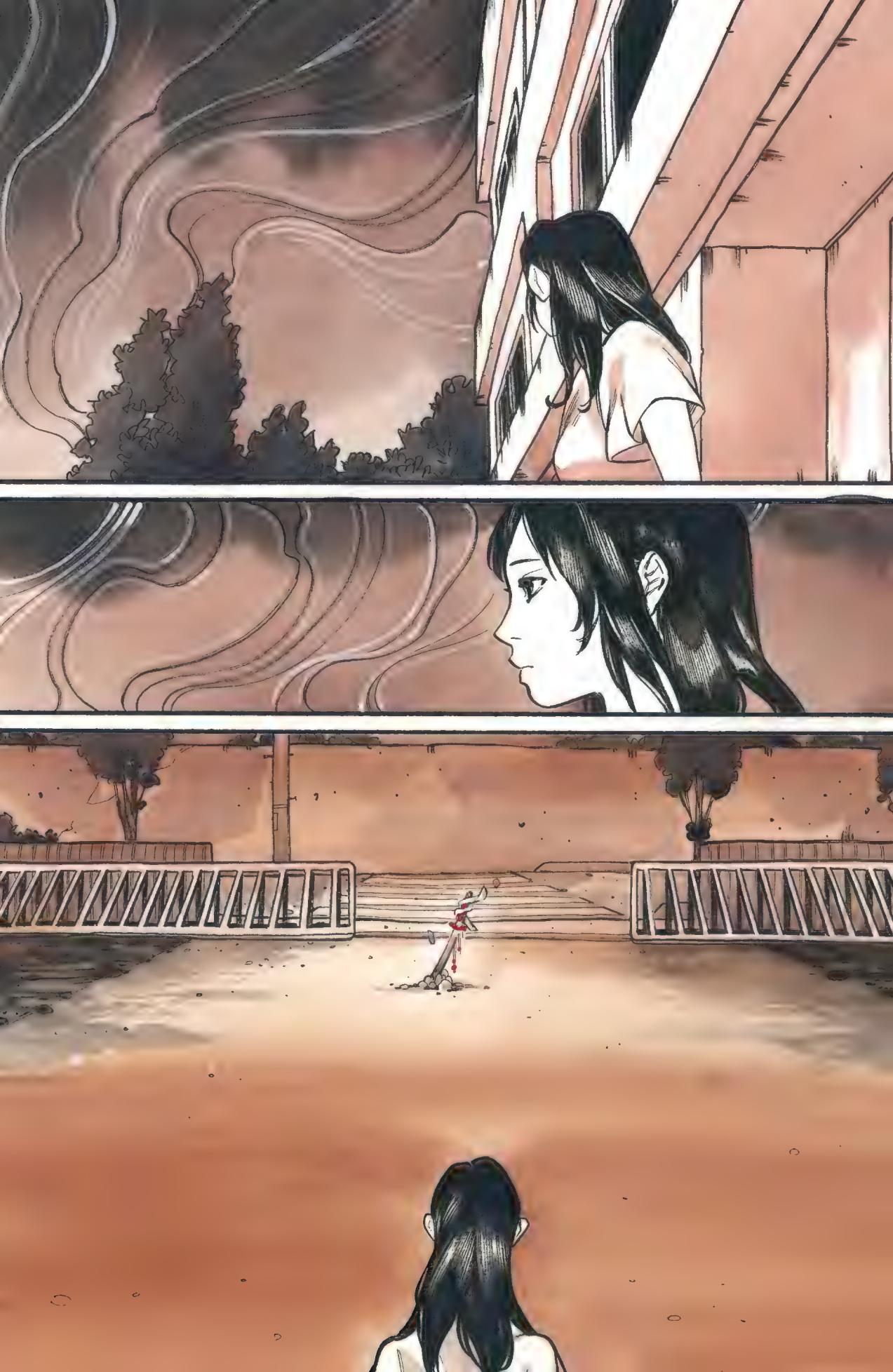

KANG
KANG
WHO IS THAT, FUMI?
MISS ITSUKI IS THE ONLY BLACKSMITH IN THE IKAI. LIKE YOU, SHE WASN'T BORN HERE BUT FOUND HER WAY IN. SHE'LL REFORGE YOUR TANTO STRONGER THAN BEFORE, AS A KATANA.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YAMATO BETRAYED US...
WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED?
I DON'T KNOW. YAMATO USED TO BELIEVE AS WE DO, THAT RETURNING KIGANDOSHI'S HEAD WILL CALM HIM AND END THE EARTHQUAKES.
RECENTLY, YAMATO STARTED QUESTIONING THE JUSTICE OF THIS--HE BELIEVES RETURNING THE HEAD WILL REIGNITE WAR BETWEEN HUMANS AND YOKAI. HE SEES IT AS DANGEROUS.
HE EVEN THINKS ACCEPTING YOUR HELP TAINTS YOKAI.
MANY LISTENED TO WHAT HE HAD TO SAY. IF IT COMES TO WAR, THEY WILL TAKE HIS SIDE. IT COULD GET UGLY.
MY HOPE IS THAT WE CAN GET THROUGH TO HIM BEFORE IT COMES TO THAT.

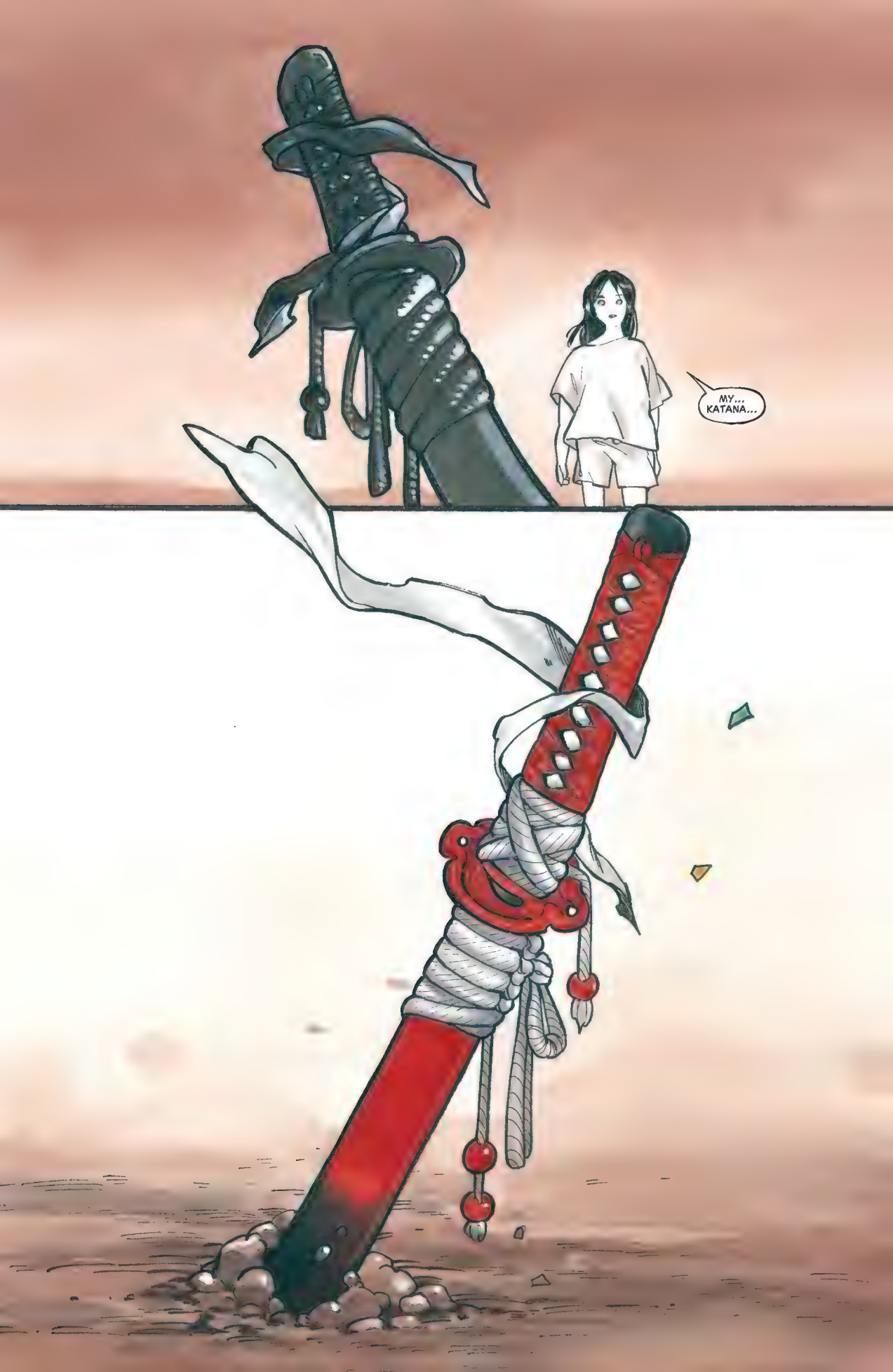
WHO'S THERE?
KUMOSUKE!
WHERE DID YOU GO? LOOK AT YOU... ARE THESE SWORD CUTS?
WHERE IS BAKE-YOROI?

OH NO... BAKE-YOROI...
HOW COULD YAMATO HAVE...?
ざわ
ざわ
ざわ
YOUR KATANA NEEDS TO BE FORGED, PRINCESS MARIKO. WE CAN'T STOP YAMATO WITHOUT YOU.
KIGANDOSHI'S CURSE! KIGANDOSHI'S CURSE!
DON'T EVEN SAY THAT!
A... CURSE...

MARIKO

AH...
WHAT...? WHERE IS EVERYONE...?
WHY AM I IN SCHOOL...?




MY... KATANA...

異界の華
DEMON WARS
DOWN IN FLAMES

OOF!
MISS MARIKO.

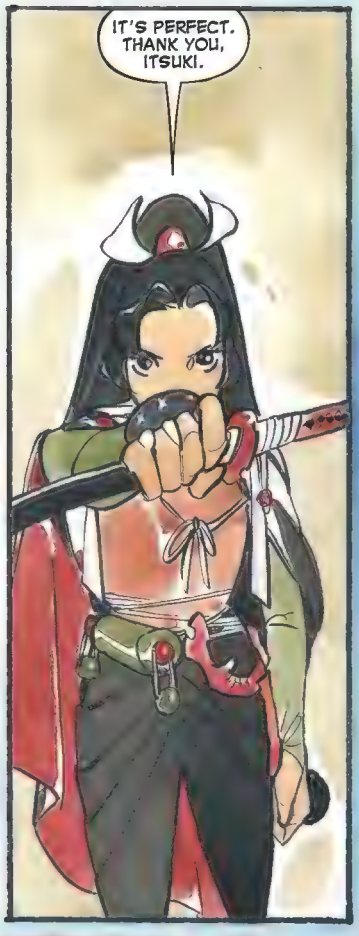
IT IS TIME TO GO HOME.
KUROKI! GRANNY!
I...CAN'T. I HAVE TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED.
LIKE YOU TAUGHT ME.
SO BE IT.

THE DOOR TO THE IKAI IS OPEN.
PRINCESS MARIKO.
IT'S QUITE SAFE.
...RIGHT.
WELL, HERE GOES NOTHING.

AGAIN, YOU FAIL TO HEED OUR WARNINGS...
...AND YOU RETURN TO WHERE YOU ARE NOT WANTED.
YAMATO!

RETURN THE HEAD OF KIGANDOSHI AND DOOM THE HUMAN WORLD. THE ONI KING WILL REGAIN HIS FULL WILL AND STRENGTH. SHOULD HE DESIRE *REVENGE*...
...WE WOULD BE *POWERLESS* TO STOP HIM.
I BEG YOU, MARIKO--LISTEN TO ME. I AM ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT OUR WORLDS.
I BELIEVE YOU. I CAN *SENSE* IT.
BUT I SENSE SOMETHING *ELSE* INSIDE OF YOU. SOMETHING SEPARATE.
SOMETHING *EVIL*.

YAMATO... WHAT IS INSIDE YOU?
すた THMP
PRINCESS MARIKO!
HEY! YOU GOT THE KATANA I FORGED FOR YOU!
I WAS WORRIED THERE WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH STEEL IN YOUR OLD TANTO TO FORM THE BLADE, BUT THAT ONI METAL IS INCREDIBLE.


IT'S PERFECT. THANK YOU, ITSUKI.

NOW THE FUN BEGINS! TIME TO GIVE KIGANDOSHI HIS HEAD BACK!
AND TAKE THAT PUNK YAMATO DOWN A PEG. HE'S WAITING FOR YOU AT MUTSUMATA NO IWA.

NOT YET, ITSUKI. I NEED TO MAKE SURE RETURNING THE HEAD IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO-- FOR THE HUMAN WORLD AND FOR THE IKAI.
I'M GOING TO *TALK* TO YAMATO, NOT FIGHT HIM. I WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

WHAT?!
I MADE YOU THAT SWORD SO YOU WOULD ***USE*** IT.

YAMATO SINCERELY BELIEVES HE IS PROTECTING OUR WORLDS. HE WANTS TO ***SAVE*** HUMANS FROM KIGANDOSHI.
BUT HE'S ALSO SAID HUMANS ARE TAINTING THE YOKAI.
SOMETHING IS NOT ADDING UP. THERE'S A PUZZLE THAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I'LL KNOW WHAT THE TRULY RIGHT THING TO DO IS.

MARIKO, WHAT *NONSENSE* HAS YAMATO BEEN FILLING YOUR HEAD WITH?
AS KIGANDOSHI'S DESCENDANT, IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSIDER BOTH SIDES. RETURNING THE HEAD MAY CALM THE ONI KING, AS YOU SAY...OR IT MAY CAUSE HIM TO RAGE ON THE HUMAN WORLD, AS YAMATO FEARS.
THERE IS RISK EITHER WAY. IT'S NOT A DECISION I CAN MAKE LIGHTLY.
AND THERE MAY YET BE A *THIRD* CHOICE. IF I CAN COMMUNICATE SOMEHOW WITH KIGANDOSHI...
YOU THINK YOU CAN REASON WITH THAT--
FLAP
MY DEAR MARIKO. IS THIS HOTHEAD BOTHERING YOU?

AOSAGI!
LET'S GO, OAMI.
TAKE ME TO YAMATO...
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU, MY DEAR.

THE HELL YOU WILL!
OAMI, TAKE MARIKO! I HAVE AN OLD SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THIS ONE.
SWISHING

HEY, MARIKO! I FORGED THE KATANA FOR YOU. I'LL TRUST YOUR CHOICE ON HOW TO USE IT.
NOW GO!

PRINCESS MARIKO... YOU'LL GIVE KIGANDOSHI'S HEAD BACK, RIGHT...?

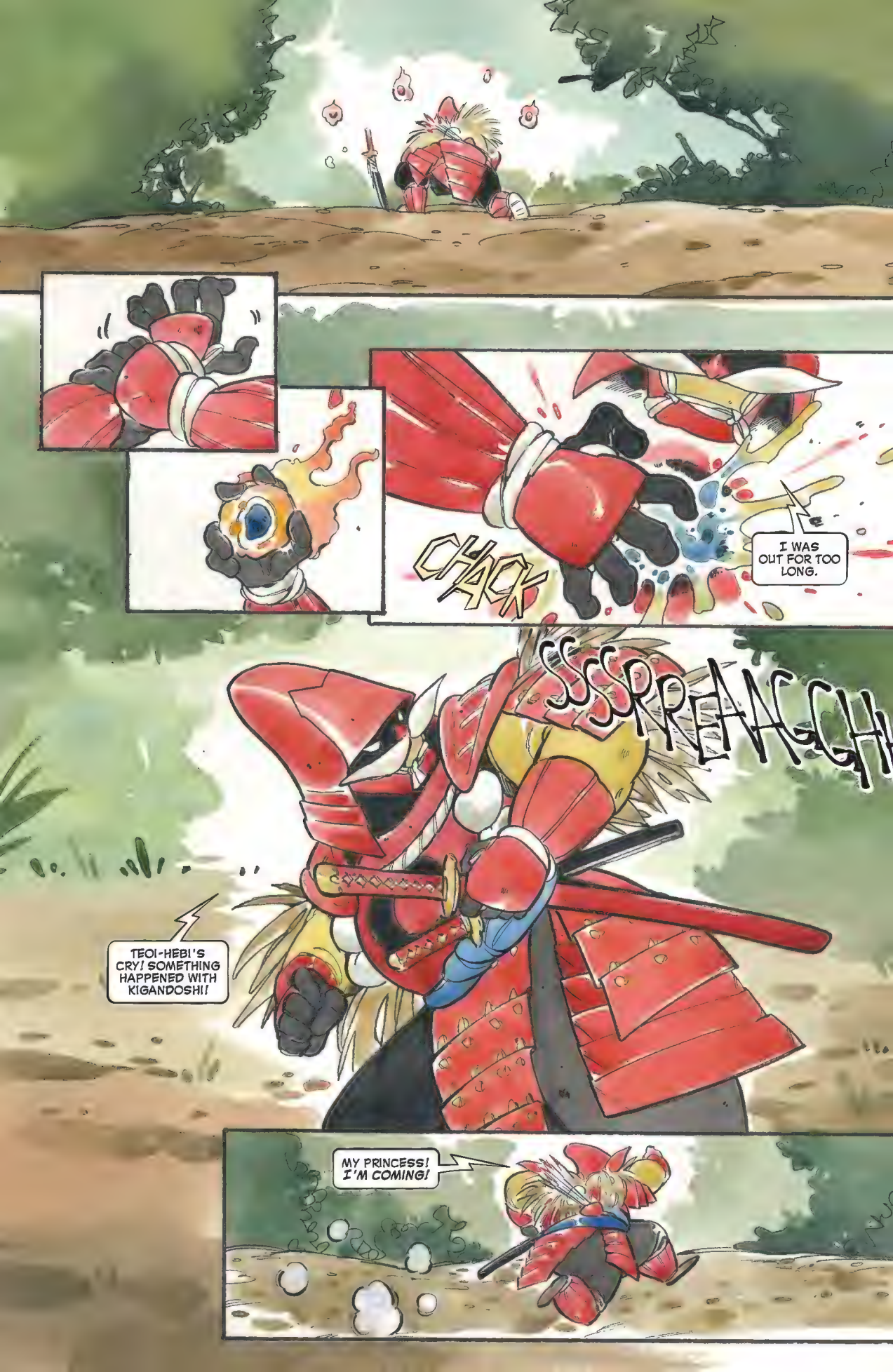
NOT UNTIL I'M SURE IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
AND UNTIL I KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YAMATO.

SSSSSSSS

NEKOMATA! HAYABUSA!
I'M HERE TO TALK TO YAMATO!

SIGH
...SHE HAS RETURNED...

SSSSRREAAGGHH
TEOI-HEBI, NO! STAND DOWN! DO NOT ATTACK THE PRINCESS!
BIG SNAKE!


CHACK
I WAS OUT FOR TOO LONG.
SSSSRREAAGGH
TEOI-HEBI'S CRY! SOMETHING HAPPENED WITH KIGANDOSHI!
MY PRINCESS! I'M COMING!

SO, TODAY'S THE DAY, HUH? READY TO TRY TO KILL ME AT LAST?
I'VE BEEN READY SINCE YOUR FATHER KILLED MINE.
IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT.*
WAS IT? TO YOUR FATHER, THE MIGHTY, *HUMAN* HUNTER, MY FATHER WAS JUST ANOTHER BIRD. TO BE SHOT, PLUCKED, AND *EATEN.* HUMANS ARE ALL ALIKE. I *LOATHE* THEM.
AND NOW YOU'RE ALL SO EAGER TO PLEASE THE LITTLE *HUMAN* GIRL WHO WANDERS INTO OUR REALM *UNINVITED.* SINCE SHE ARRIVED, IT'S BEEN "PRINCESS MARIKO" THIS AND "PRINCESS MARIKO" THAT. EVEN YOU'RE WAGGING YOUR TAIL FOR HER.
YOU AND I WERE FRIENDS ONCE, AOSAGI.
AND IN THE NAME OF THAT FRIENDSHIP...

...I WILL WEEP OVER YOUR GRAVE.
FWOAAAAR
TSSSSSSS
HOW LIKE YOUR FATHER YOU ARE.
HOW HUMAN.

!
INK
ENOUGH!
THUD

NEVER ENOUGH.
FWOAAAAR
MARIKO'S KATANA. IT REEKS OF YOUR FORGE.
SHE NEEDED IT IN CASE ANY JERKS LIKE YOU GOT IN HER WAY.
ALWAYS THE SAME WITH YOUR KIND. PREACHING PEACE WHILE FORGING WEAPONS OF WAR. SENDING PEOPLE TO "TALK" AT SWORD POINT. AND YET YOU SAY WE ARE THE AGGRESSORS. DO YOU NOT SEE THE IRONY?
I SUSPECT YOU DON'T. WHAT'S THE POINT OF TALKING TO YOU ANYWAY? WE BOTH KNOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE. YOUR TRUE NATURE.

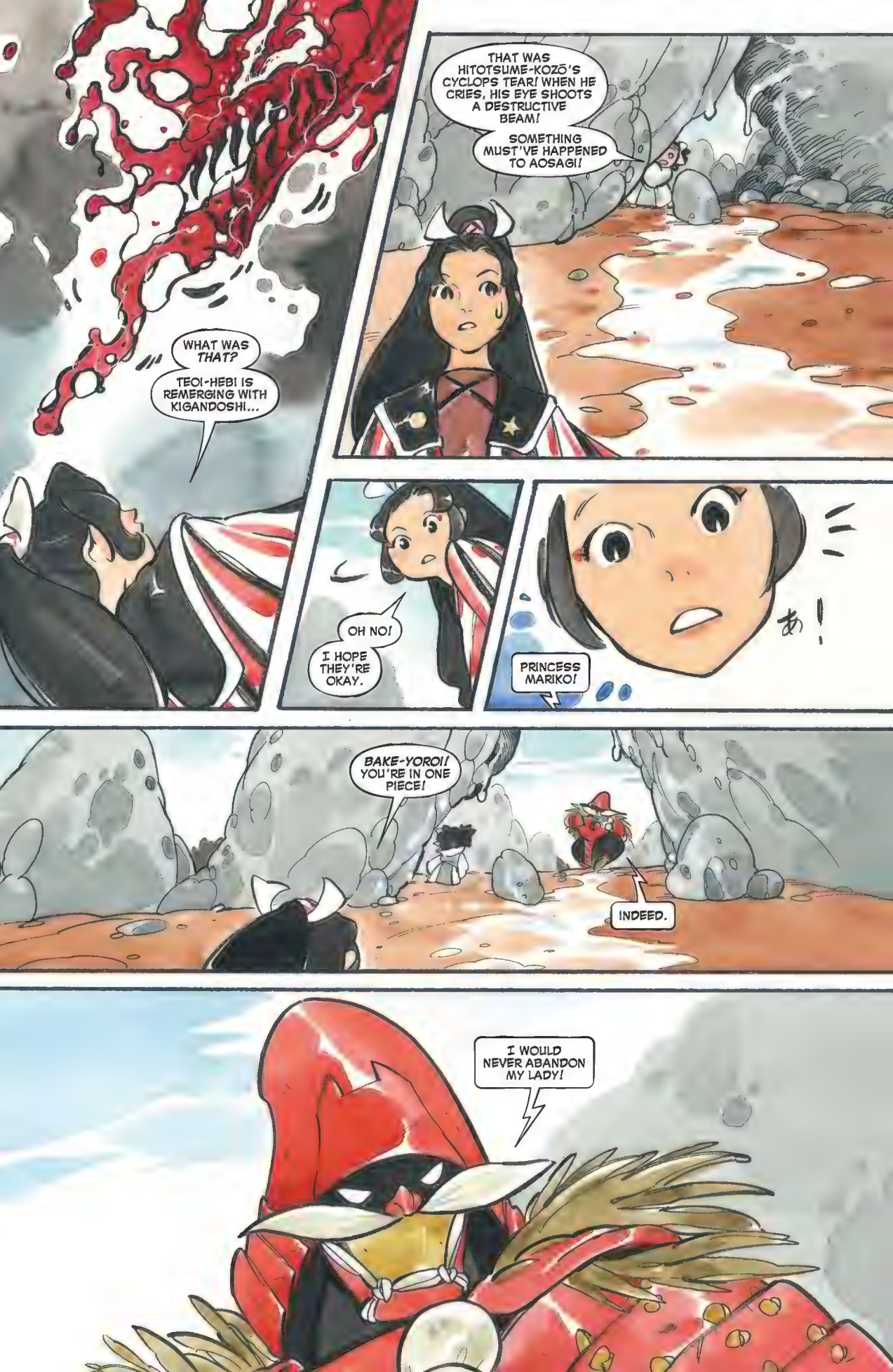
MAKE WHATEVER FACES YOU WANT. ALL I SEE IS THAT SAME HUMAN GIRL.
I MAY HAVE GONE TOO FAR...

SAY HELLO TO OUR FATHERS.
FWOAAAAR
NOW TO DEAL WITH MARIKO.

THIS ISN'T OVER.
URK!
I THINK IT IS.
!!

HITOTSUME-KOZŌ!
NO! DON'T CRY!
SNIFF
UNNNN
UNNNN

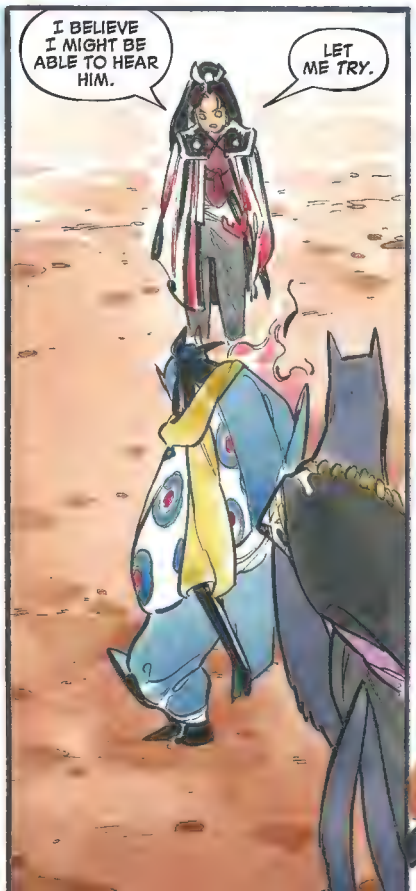
WHA...?
WHAAAAAAAAA


WHAT WAS THAT?
TEOI-HEBI IS REMERGING WITH KIGANDOSHI...
THAT WAS HITOTSUME-KOZŌ'S CYCLOPS TEAR! WHEN HE CRIES, HIS EYE SHOOTS A DESTRUCTIVE BEAM!
SOMETHING MUST'VE HAPPENED TO AOSAGI!
OH NO! I HOPE THEY'RE OKAY.
あ！
PRINCESS MARIKO!
BAKE-YOROI! YOU'RE IN ONE PIECE!
INDEED.
I WOULD NEVER ABANDON MY LADY!

UPSTARTS! YOU DARE OCCUPY KIGANDOSHI'S SACRED SPACE?
PLEASE, BAKE-YOROI. LET ME HANDLE THIS.

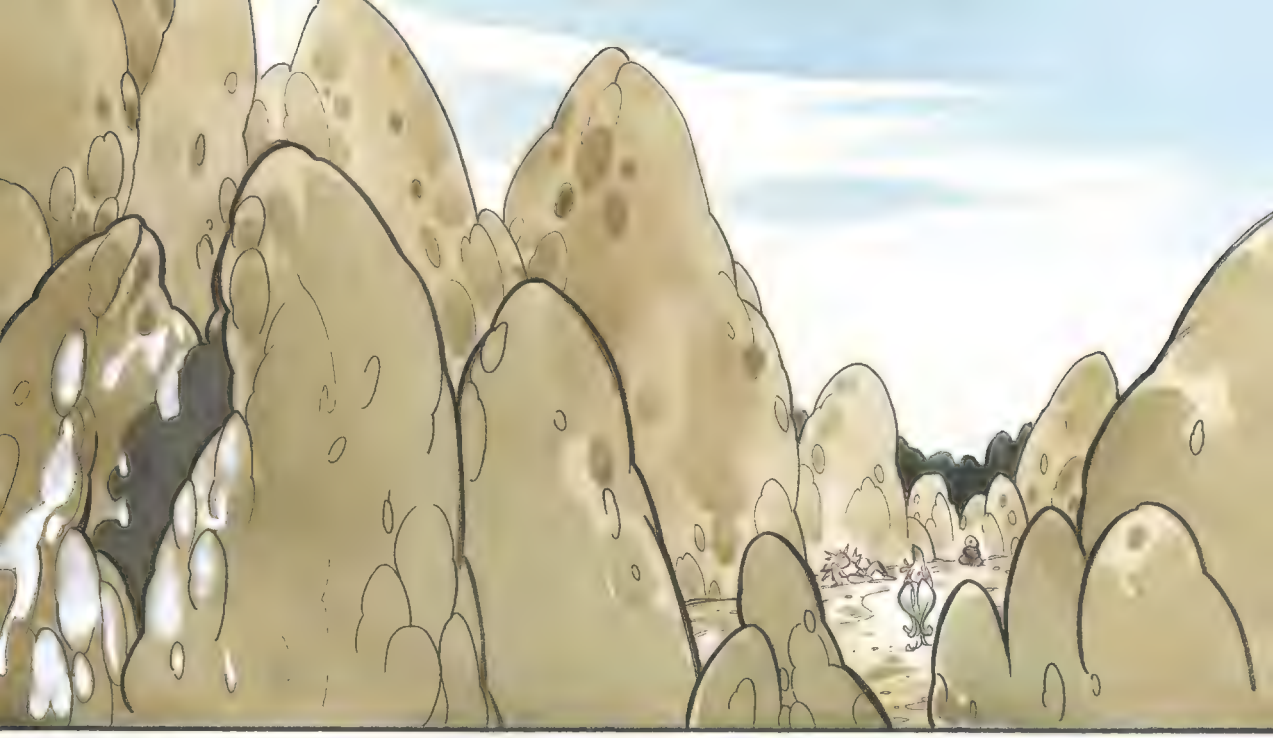
YAMATO, WE'VE HEARD EVERYONE'S OPINION EXCEPT THE ONE THAT MATTERS MOST.
KIGANDOSHI'S.

STOP!


I BELIEVE I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HEAR HIM.
LET ME TRY.

TAK

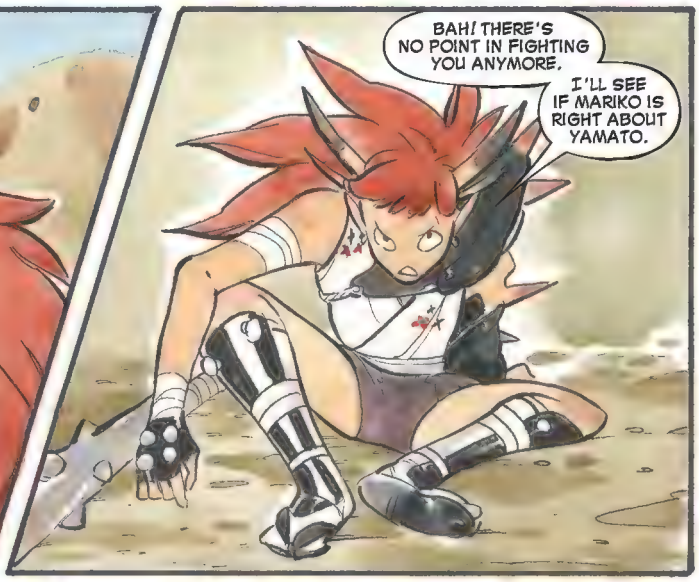
OW...
THIS PRESSURE... WHO ARE YOU?
FOOLISH GIRL!
VOICES IN MY HEAD?!
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THE WAYS OF YOKAI!



HITOTSUME-KOZŌ DOESN'T WANT ME TO KILL YOU TODAY. PERHAPS NEXT TIME.
SNIFF SNIFF

I PRAY MARIKO SHOWS MORE WISDOM THAN YOU.

MARIKO IS CONVINCED YAMATO IS HIDING SOMETHING. SHE PLANS TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.


BAH! THERE'S NO POINT IN FIGHTING YOU ANYMORE.
I'LL SEE IF MARIKO IS RIGHT ABOUT YAMATO.

VILLAIN! UNHAND HER...
STOP, BAKE-YOROI!
YOU DARE DRAW YOUR KATANA HERE?

I DARE, NEKOMATA!
SKREEE
YOU'RE NOT... YAMATO...
WHO ARE YOU?!

IMPOSSIBLE!
YOU'RE ALIVE?!
THE SCARLET HANNYA,
MOMIJI!

異界の神
DEMON WARS
SCARLET SIN

MOMIJI!
YOU'RE THE ONE I SAW IN YAMATO'S EYES. WHOSE PAIN I FELT.
YOU'VE BEEN MANIPULATING EVERYONE. CASTING ILLUSIONS...
I SHOWED YOU ONLY THE TRUTH.
I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP, MARIKO. WAKING KIGANDOSHI ALLOWED ME TO TAP HIS POWER. BUT I NO LONGER REQUIRE YOUR PRESENCE. THE IKAI NEEDS NO OUTSIDE SAVIOR.
FWICK
TMP TMP TMP
DON'T MIND MENTORI. MY FACE CREATES MASKS OF MY EMOTIONS, AND WHEN THEY FALL OFF, MENTORI COLLECTS THEM.

NOW...
TIME TO SAY GOODBYE.
YAMATO.
ESCORT OUR "PRINCESS" HOME.
SO, MOMIJI WAS CONTROLLING YAMATO!

THNNK
HOME?
I AM THE DAUGHTER OF AN ONI. I AM A YOKAI.
HERE, AT LAST, I'VE FOUND MY HOME!
FWWSH
AND I WILL FIGHT FOR IT.
MARIKO, DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE HER! THE STRONGER YOUR WILLPOWER, THE MORE POWERFUL HER HOLD. THE SCARLET HANNYA CAN CONFOUND AND BEWITCH YOU...

...LIKE SHE HAS WITH YAMATO.
I KNOW, NEKOMATA!
WE HAVE TO BREAK HER GRIP!
KLANG
WHAT IS MOMIJI'S ENDGAME?
YEAAAHHHH!

UHHH...
!!
FWWF
MARIKO! HEADS UP!
FWOOSH
KONK
THE GREAT AOSHISHI NO YAMATO.
WILL YOU FALL SO EASILY?

HYAAH!
BAMM
I GUESS SO.
MOMIJI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! SOWING CHAOS WITHOUT PURPOSE!
DID I MAKE A MESS, HAYABUSA?
THEN I SUPPOSE IT'S UP TO ME...

...TO WASH IT ALL AWAY.

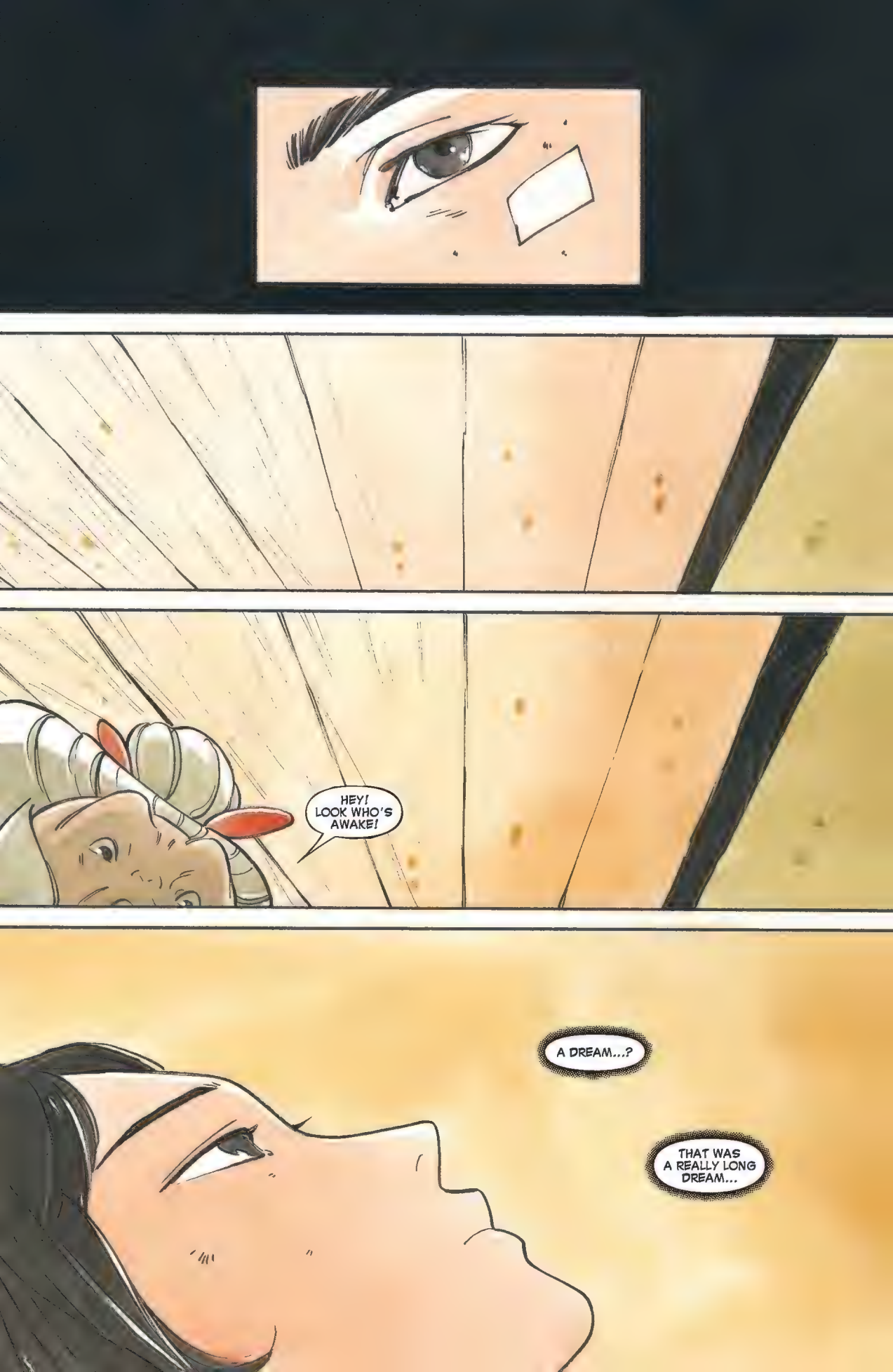
SPLASH

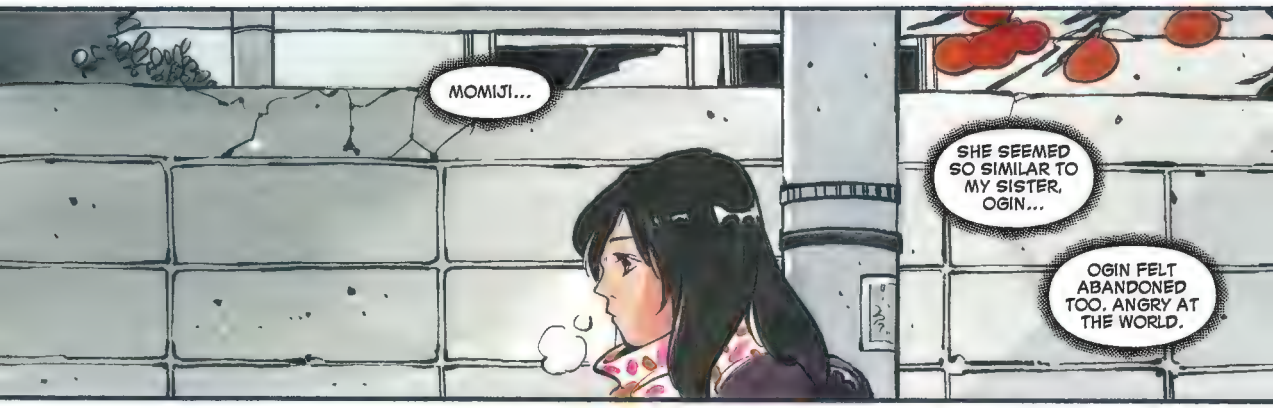
SNFF
SNFF
SHK
IS SOMEONE CRYING?
WHO IS THAT...?
WBB
SNFF

AOSAGI!
PRINCESS MARIKO'S STILL IN THERE!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
STAY BACK!
YOU CAN'T CONTROL ME LIKE YOU DID YAMATO.
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
AS A CHILD, I WAS TAKEN BY HUMANS. PEOPLE I TRUSTED *USED* ME FOR MY POWERS... I WAS PATHETIC. HELPLESS.
I LEARNED TO USE *OTHERS* INSTEAD. I SURVIVED, GREW STRONG.
LIFE TAUGHT ME A LESSON, AND I LEARNED IT.
DON'T YOU *DARE* LOOK AT ME WITH PITY! I WAITED FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TAP KIGANDOSHI. ALL THAT MATTERS IS POWER. LOOK AT WHAT I HAVE BECOME! I AM *POWER!*
THOSE WHO MADE ME DESERVE THE PAIN AND FEAR I BRING THEM.
I NEED NO HOME...

A PRINCESS LIKE YOU COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND...
...YOU HAVE A HOME.
...OGIN?


HEY! LOOK WHO'S AWAKE!
A DREAM...?
THAT WAS A REALLY LONG DREAM...


MOMIJI...
SHE SEEMED SO SIMILAR TO MY SISTER, OGIN...
OGIN FELT ABANDONED TOO. ANGRY AT THE WORLD.

I COULDN'T REACH PAST OGIN'S RAGE.
...I WONDER WHAT SHE'S DOING NOW...

HUH? ...MY BACK... A SHARP PAIN...

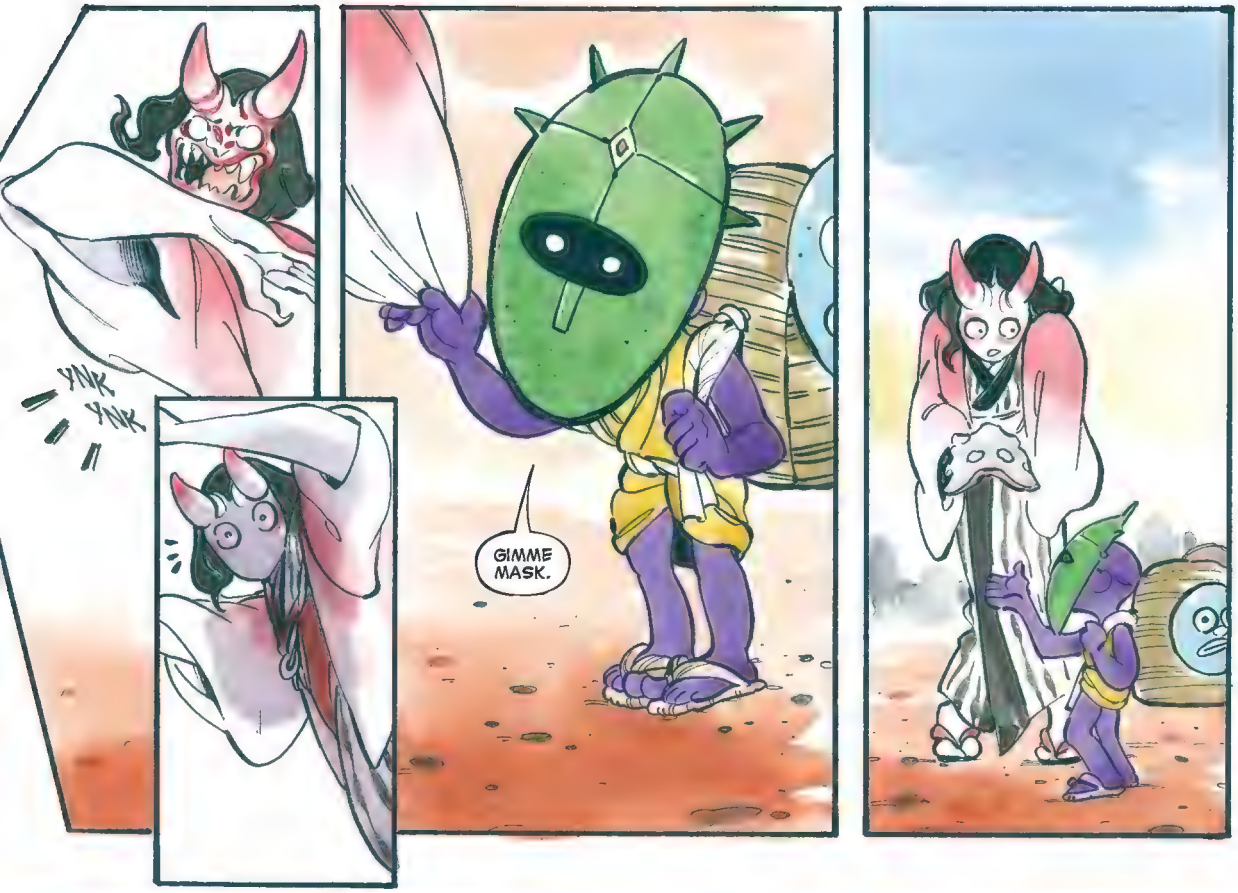
OH, THAT'S RIGHT... I TRIED TO LOVE OGIN, AND SHE STABBED ME IN THE BACK. LITERALLY. WITH A KNIFE.
IT HURTS SO MUCH...
SO, THIS IS HOW I DIE? I HAD SO MUCH MORE I WANTED TO DO...
MARIKO

DEMON'S DESCENDANT. FLESH OF MY BLOOD.
IT WAS I WHO CALLED YOU. I WHO OPENED THE WAYS.
MOMIJI THINKS SHE CAN USE ME TO MAKE THE PRESENT PAY FOR THE WRONGS OF HER PAST.
MARIKO, JUST LIKE YOU, MOMIJI IS LOST.
THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO. GUIDE MOMIJI...
...AND RETURN MY HEAD SO I CAN REST...
...AND GO HOME...

WAKE UP!
YOU'RE CAUGHT IN MOMIJI'S ILLUSIONS!
...AN ILLUSION? NO... I SAW MY HOME... I SAW HER...
I SAW...
I SAW BEHIND THE MASK.

NO! NO! NO!
I SAID DON'T LOOK AT ME!
MENTORI! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
...WHAT HAVE I BEEN DOING?
TEOI-HEBI IS GOING CRAZY!
I CAN'T HOLD HIM!
SNTCHH

GIVE ME THAT!
YOU WOULD USE KIGANDOSHI LIKE OTHERS USED YOU. IS THAT WHY YOU SHOWED ME? SO I'D UNDERSTAND YOUR REVENGE?
DON'T SPEAK LIKE YOU UNDERSTAND! I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAW!
ALL I WANT IS FOR YOU TO DIE!
YOU MAY NOT HAVE A HOME TO GO TO...
...BUT TO AT LEAST ONE PERSON...
...YOU ARE THEIR HOME.


YNK.
YNK.
GIMME MASK.

WILL YOU FIGHT WITH US, BAKE-YOROI?
AYE, I WILL. TIME TO SET OUR DIFFERENCES ASIDE.
BUT...WHAT IS MARIKO DOING?

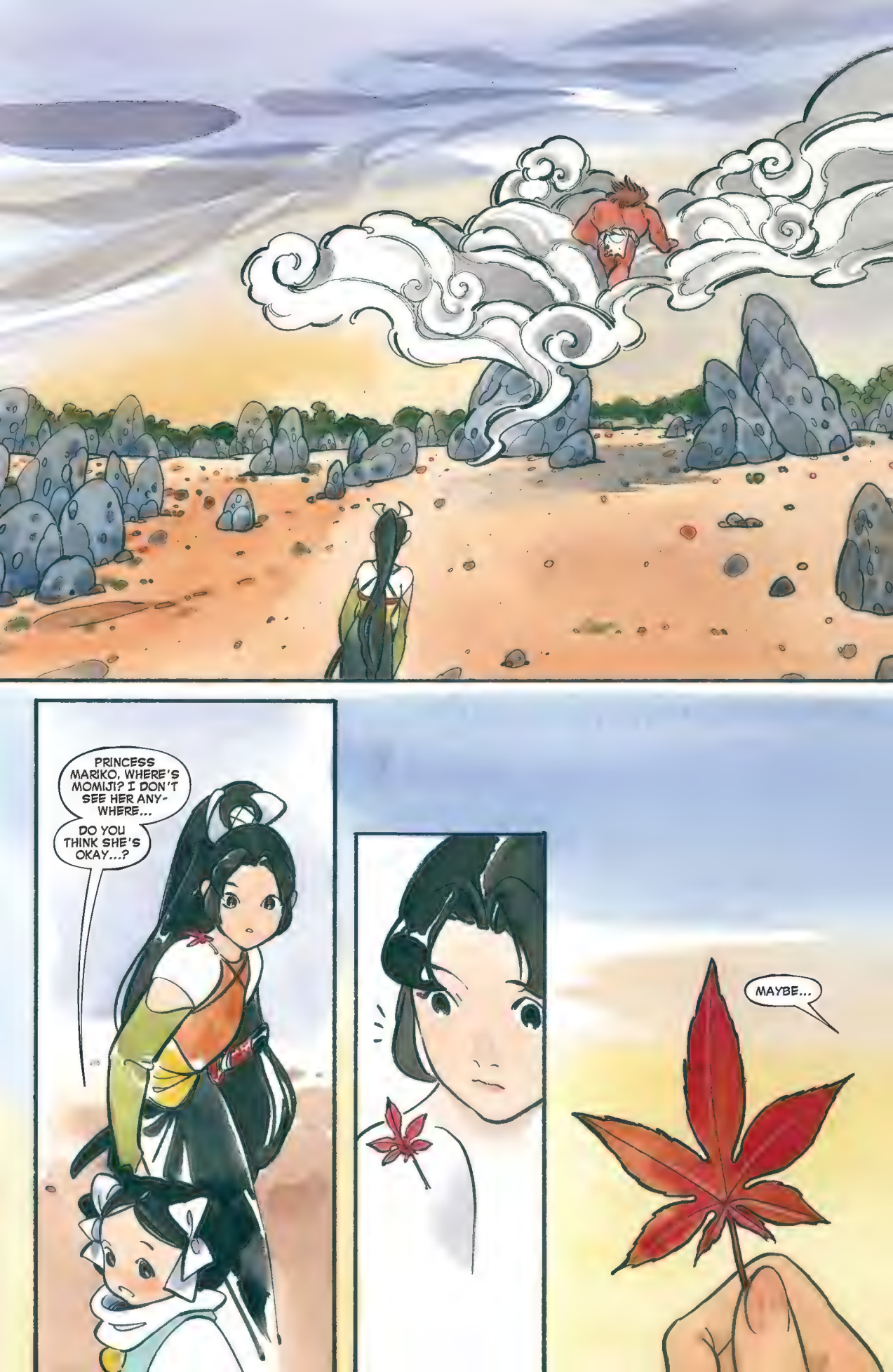
HUURR WAAHHHRR
WE CAN'T HOLD HIM.
WE MUST! MARIKO NEEDS MORE TIME!
THWIP

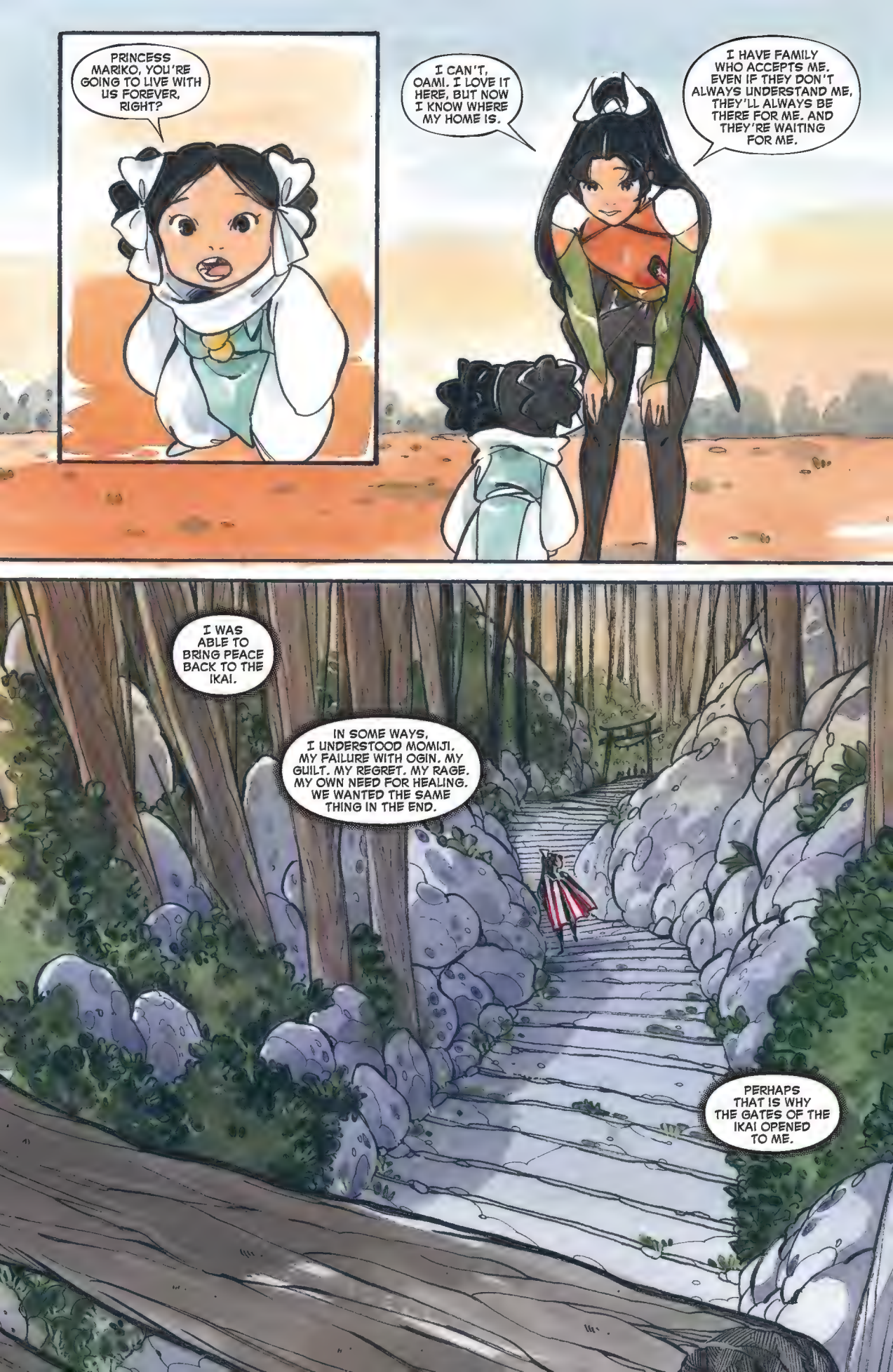
KUMOSUKE!
FWWWWW
MENTORI!
SSSWWWPPRRLLL
SSSWWWPPRRLLL

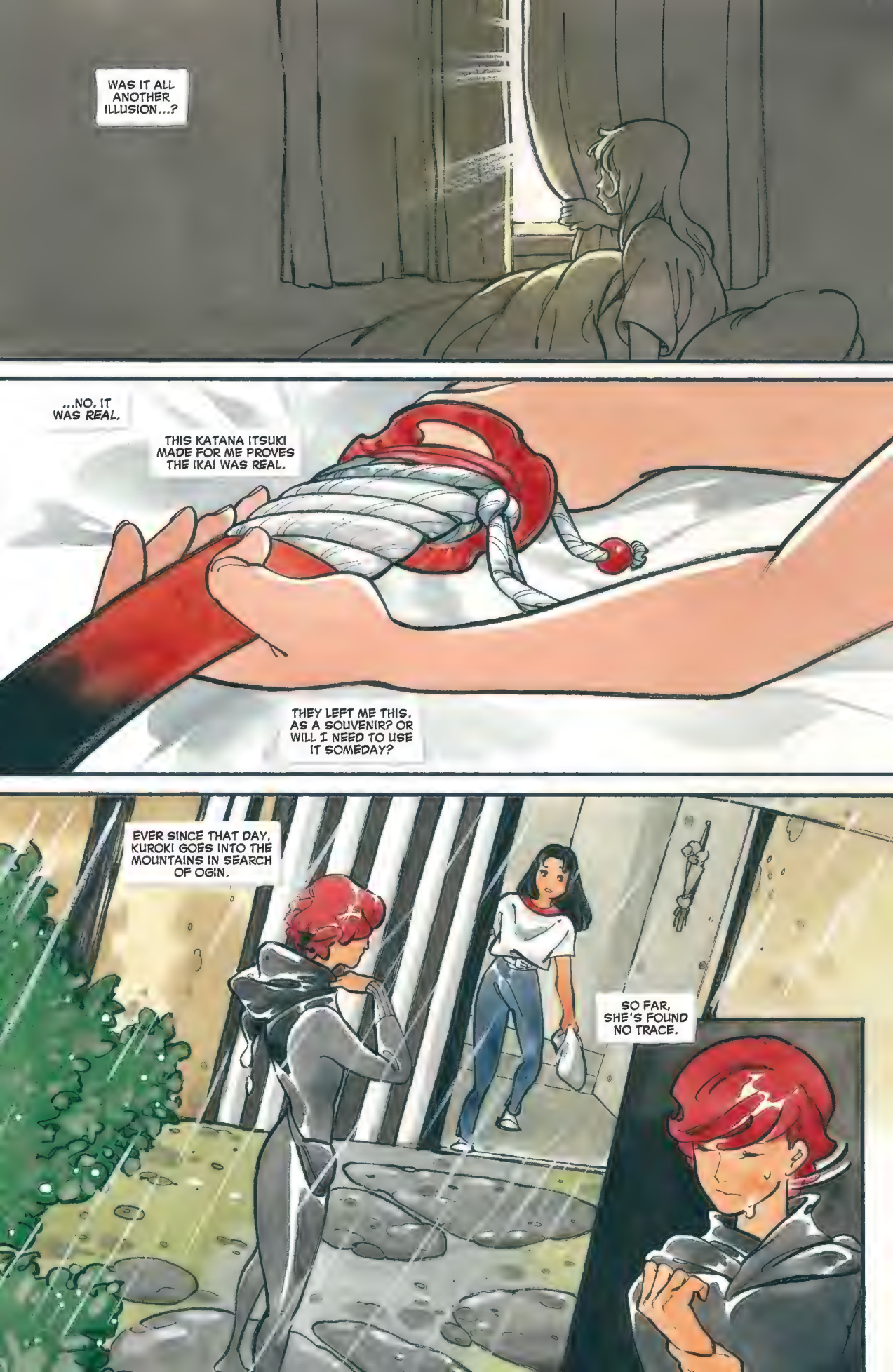
YNNNN
ARE YOU HURT?
KUMOSUKE! GIVE ME A BOOST.
IT'S TIME TO END THIS.

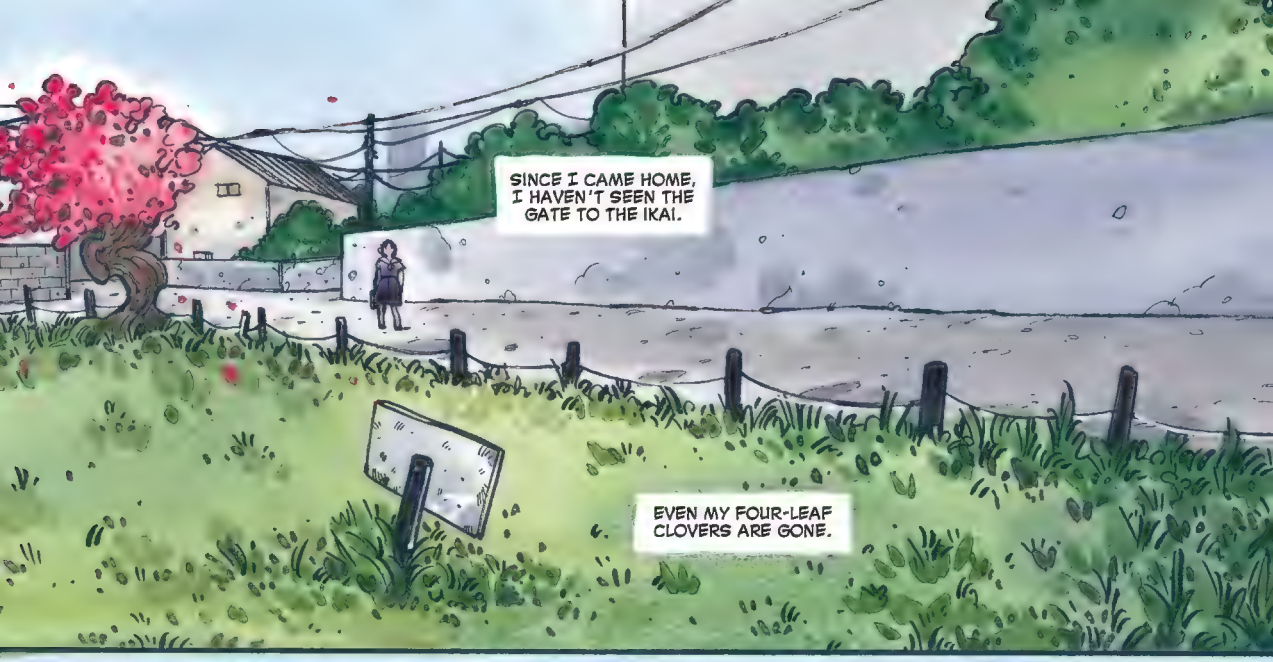
SHLIP
PLIP
FWOOM
TEOI-HEBI LOST HIS HOST. HE'S RETREATING.
IS IT OVER...?

KIGANDOSHI'S HEAD IS BACK!
WHERE'S HE GOING...?
OGIN.


PRINCESS MARIKO, WHERE'S MOMIJI? I DON'T SEE HER ANY-WHERE...
DO YOU THINK SHE'S OKAY...?
MAYBE...

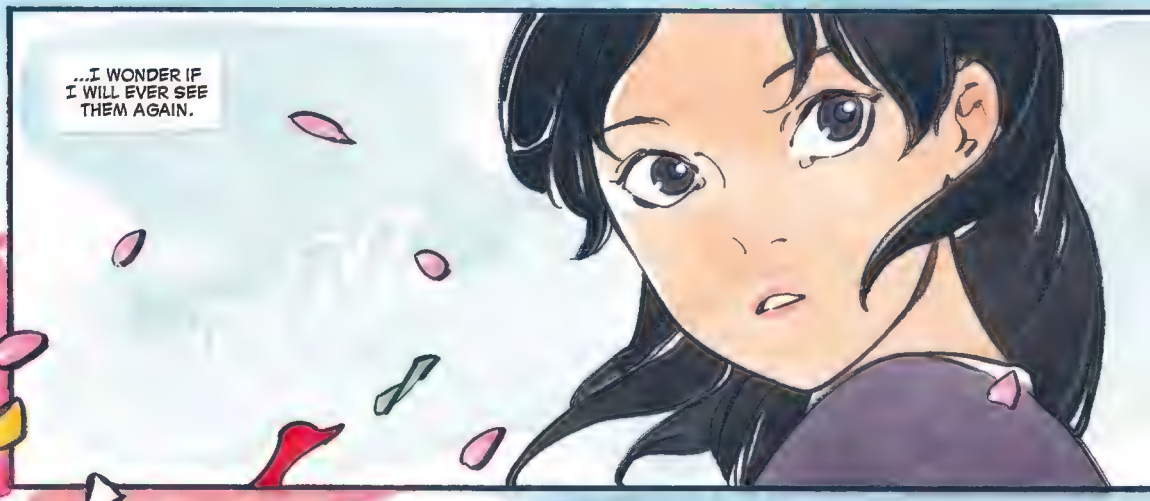

PRINCESS MARIKO, YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE WITH US FOREVER, RIGHT?
I CAN'T, OAMI. I LOVE IT HERE, BUT NOW I KNOW WHERE MY HOME IS.
I HAVE FAMILY WHO ACCEPTS ME. EVEN IF THEY DON'T ALWAYS UNDERSTAND ME, THEY'LL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR ME. AND THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME.
I WAS ABLE TO BRING PEACE BACK TO THE IKAI.
IN SOME WAYS, I UNDERSTOOD MOMIJI. MY FAILURE WITH OGIN. MY GUILT. MY REGRET. MY RAGE. MY OWN NEED FOR HEALING. WE WANTED THE SAME THING IN THE END.
PERHAPS THAT IS WHY THE GATES OF THE IKAI OPENED TO ME.

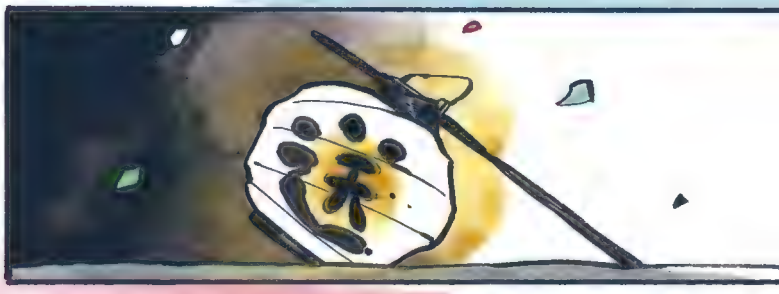

WAS IT ALL ANOTHER ILLUSION...?
...NO. IT WAS *REAL*.
THIS KATANA ITSUKI MADE FOR ME PROVES THE IKAI WAS REAL.
THEY LEFT ME THIS, AS A SOUVENIR? OR WILL I NEED TO USE IT SOMEDAY?
EVER SINCE THAT DAY, KUROKI GOES INTO THE MOUNTAINS IN SEARCH OF OGIN.
SO FAR, SHE'S FOUND NO TRACE.


SINCE I CAME HOME, I HAVEN'T SEEN THE GATE TO THE IKAI.
EVEN MY FOUR-LEAF CLOVERS ARE GONE.

売地
*PROPERTY FOR SALE.

IF EVERYTHING I SAW IN THE IKAI WAS REAL...


...I WONDER IF I WILL EVER SEE THEM AGAIN.



THE END?
おわり

THE DEMON WARS SAGA

"Thanks for reading!
Until next time."

— PEACH MOMOKO

The Iron Samurai variant by
ALEX MALEEV

DEMON WARS
YOKAI FILES

化け装束

BAKE-YOROI

LIT:
CHANGING ARMOR

It's said that the soul of a samurai is his sword, but some seem to be attached to their armor too. Maybe a little too attached…

Bake-yoroi are the animated armor of fallen samurai whose gear was stripped from their corpses after dying in battle. Their naked bodies buried and unmourned, the samurai's resentful spirits possessed the armor and transformed into yokai. Bake-yoroi have no bodies and are hollow inside their armor, although they are capable of wielding swords and attacking as if alive.

During the Sengoku Jidai, or Warring States period, feudal lords called daimyo fought a 250-year-long civil war for control of the country. The collapse of the Ashikaga Shogunate in 1464 left a power vacuum that everyone rushed to fill. Warlords such as Takeda Shingen fought against Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu. These battles consumed the island of Japan. The land became a graveyard for the corpses of samurai. Famers and others struggling to survive robbed bodies of weapons and armor to sell to opposing factions. This was a dishonorable yet necessary trade.

When Tokugawa Ieyasu seized control of Japan in 1603 and was named Shogun, the Sengoku Jidai ended. The peace of the Edo period began. Samurai became administrators and government officials instead of warriors.

Yet cursed armor do not lay down their weapons as easily as living soldiers do. A few bake-yoroi still haunt Japan, resentful of the shameful treatment they suffered.

Art by
PEACH MOMOKO

Text by
ZACK DAVISSON

イボ神

IBO-GAMI

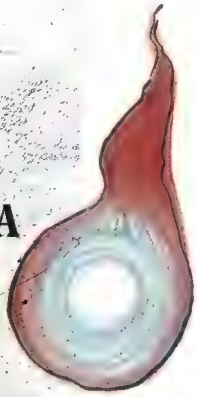
LIT:
WART GOD

Nobody likes warts. So it is no wonder people are willing to worship any deity able to take warts away. There are numerous ibo-gami shrines across Japan. A small shrine in Sōsa, Chiba prefecture, tells of two sisters, one of whom had hideous warts. The other sister prayed to every shrine in town, before a deity took pity on her and gave her a magic stone that cured her sister's warts. Another story tells of an oni who absorbed negative energy into its own body, manifesting it as a giant wart. The wart fell off, and people began to worship it as an avatar against evil. The wart transformed into a kami and ibo-gami was born.

人魂

HITODAMA

LIT:
HUMAN SOULS



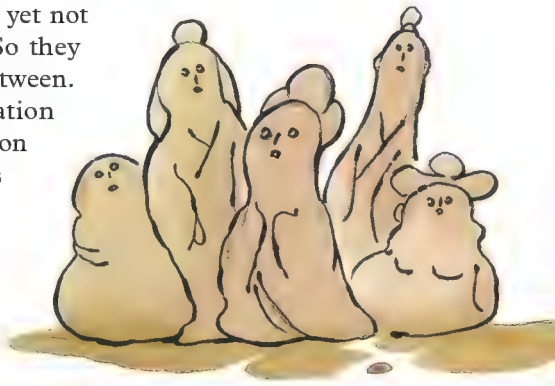
One of Japan's most ancient yokai, hitodama are balls of fire that hover alone or near other yokai. They are thought to be human souls, perhaps those without enough will to manifest a full form. As raw supernatural energy, they gather near concentrated sources of magical power. These are Japan's version of the classic will-o'-the-wisp, which exists in every culture.

ヒトガタ

HITOGATA

LIT:
HUMAN SHAPE

Hitogata are the mid-stage between hitodama and yūrei (ghosts). They are the souls of humans who are not strong enough to manifest a full human shape and yet not as weak as hitodama. So they end up somewhere in between. There is some speculation that hitogata are based on the clay haniwa figures of the Kofun period, which were used as funerary objects in burial rituals.



NEKOMATA

LIT:
AGAIN CAT

Beginning in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), reports started appearing of a massive, man-eating cat stalking and killing hunters in the forests of Yamato, modern-day Nara prefecture. Accounts from the time describe the beast as being larger than a wild boar. Illustrations show them as striped like tigers, with two tails coiling from their rear. In his 12th-century scroll *Tsurezuregusa* (*Essays in Idleness*), the monk Yoshida Kenkō wrote, "Deep in the mountains, there is a creature called the nekomata. It is said that it feeds on humans."

Nekomata are one of the oldest of Japan's yokai. There are records spanning centuries, presented mostly as factual accounts, of attacks on people traveling through forests. There was nothing supernatural about these ancient nekomata. They were treated like any other mountain predator. It is highly likely nekomata were based on a real animal, either an extinct cryptid, such as the theorized prehistoric Japanese tiger called yamaneko, or perhaps a population of actual tigers brought over from Asia.

During the Edo period, as Japan's domestic cat population grew, new species of kaibyo—or magic cats—began to appear in the literature. Bakeneko, meaning "changing cats," were the most common. These were shape-shifters able to take human form. From historical texts, the fierce nekomata were reintroduced as part of Japan's pantheon of yokai. Stories were told of household cats who lived too long; with preternatural age, their tales split in two and they transformed into monstrous beasts. Further stories merged them with another kaibyo, the corpse-eater called kasha. Nekomata became associated with necromancy and manipulating the bodies of the dead.

Nekomata are different from bakeneko in that they are not shape-changers. Bakeneko can take human form while nekomata cannot. And unlike the nine-tailed foxes, the tails of nekomata stay firmly at two. There is no such thing as a three-tailed cat.

YOKAI FILES

土蜘蛛

TSUCHIGUMO

LIT:
DIRT SPIDER

While the portrayals of many yokai have changed over time, few have transformed as drastically as tsuchigumo. In fact, they were not even originally spiders. Called "tsuchigomori," they were humanoid with long, glowing tails. This odd appearance makes more sense when you realize that Japan has no native species of tarantulas or large spiders.

The oldest known mention of tsuchigomori comes from the 8th-century *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*). Tsuchigomori meant "those who hide underground." It is theorized that tsuchigomori were Indigenous people displaced by the Yamato, who crossed to Japan from Asia during the Yayoi period (300 BCE to 300 CE). Tsuchigomori tribes may have been underground dwellers who dug houses in the earth instead of building upward. The 8th-century *Hizen no Kuni Fudoki* states that Emperor Keiko captured the tsuchigomori Oomimi and Taremimi on a state visit to Shiki Island.

In the 14th century, trade with China brought new and wonderful things, including fabulous animals like the Chinese bird spider, a large, tiger-striped tarantula that burrows into the ground to build its nest. The switch from tsuchigomori ("those who hide in the ground") to the tsuchigumo ("earth spider" or "dirt spider") was rapid. The scroll *Tsuchigumo Soushi* reinvented tsuchigumo as a tribe of monstrous yokai attacking the capital. Legendary commander Minamoto no Yorimitsu repelled the invasion.

Similar to oni, tsuchigumo came to mean enemies of the empire. Tribes who refused to submit to Yamato rule were branded tsuchigumo. There are several tales of emperors sending heroes to tame these rogue people. Other legends tell of five great tsuchigumo gathering forces in the Katsuragi Mountains to oppose imperial rule.

In modern Japan, giant spider legends are all that remain of the aboriginal tsuchigomori. The Yamato clan was successful in erasing them from the record books, leaving only half-whispered legends of people displaced.

HITOTSUME-KOZŌ

LIT:
ONE-EYED BOY

Hitotsume-kozō are yokai that originated in the Edo period (1603–1867). They are usually described as young boys in monk robes, with a monk's shaved head and a single eye. They are harmless and mischievous, belonging to that class of yokai who delight in startling unsuspecting humans. *Kaidanoi no Tsue* by Tōsaku Ikō gives a typical account. Samurai Ojima Yakiemon was at the Asanuno family estate on a matter of business. In the waiting room, a small boy entered and, taking a scroll from the *tokonoma*, began rolling and unrolling it in play. When Yakiemon told him to stop, the boy looked over his shoulder and revealed his single eye. Yakiemon screamed and fell down. When help arrived, there was nothing in the room. Yakiemon was sent home, disgraced as a coward.

Other stories of hitotsume-kozō give them a more important duty. In the Kanto region, it is said that on December 8, they travel the land, peeking into houses. They record in ledgers which families have been bad and recommend appropriate misfortune. They leave these ledgers at guardian deity shrines to be retrieved on February 8. Villages burn down these shrines and rebuild them before that date, hoping to forestall any spiritual punishment they may have deserved.

AOSAGIBI

LIT:
BLUE HERON FIRE

Many animals in Japanese folklore have preternatural long life, which allows them to manifest special powers. Such is the case for the aosagi, known in English as the night heron. These birds are said to develop a flaming aura, called the aosagibi, or "blue heron fire." The phenomenon was first described by Toriyama Sekien in his 1779 book, *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki*, or *Illustrated One Hundred Demons from Past and Present*. Along with giving off a blue glow, their breath is said to release a golden, heatless fire. While a beautiful display, aosagibi were harmless and fled from people.

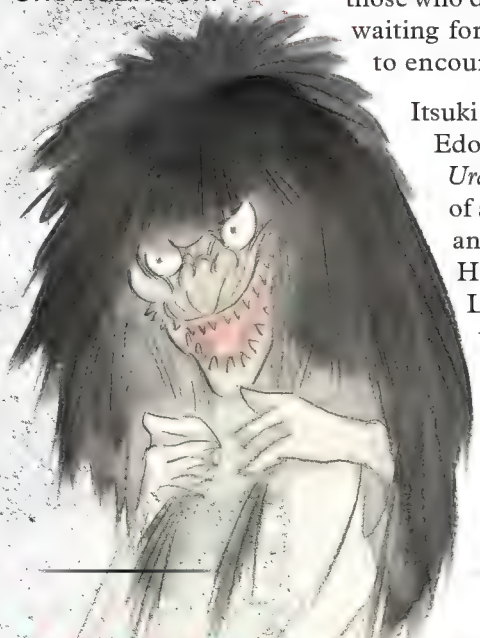
In *Demon Wars*, Aosagi references other stories where birds—often cranes, instead of herons—are shot by hunters, then transform into their yokai form. The best known of these is *The Crane Wife*, where a man rescues an injured crane and then marries her. It all comes to tears, however, as is inevitable in love stories between yokai and humans.

YOKAI FILES

縊鬼

ITSUKI

LIT:
STRANGLING ONI



Itsuki come from Chinese legends, where it is said that the underworld maintains an exact population at all times. In order to be reborn, someone must die in the same manner. Because of this, the ghosts waiting in Meikai, a shadowy underworld, eagerly await the deaths of the living. Itsuki are the spirits of those who died of suicide by hanging. When they grow impatient waiting for someone to hang themselves, they travel to Earth to encourage suicides.

Itsuki were first described in Japanese texts during the late Edo period, in volume one of Toya Suzuki's series *Hogo no Uragaki*, or *Notes Written on Scrap Paper*. The story tells of a massive banquet, where an honored guest suddenly announces he must hang himself from Kuichigai Gate. He is held down by fellow revelers until the urge passes. Later, they learn that a different person had hanged themselves from Kuichigai Gate and speculate that the itsuki had found another victim.

Stories of itsuki persist to this day in places such as the infamous suicide forest of Aokigahara. The ghosts of the dead whisper to the living to join them.

送り提灯

OKURI CHOCHIN

LIT:
SENDING-OFF
LANTERN

While many yokai are regional, some are tied to a specific city, such as Honjo, modern-day Sumida in Tokyo. Honjo was famed for yokai legends, gathered together as the *Honjo Nanafushigi*—the Seven Wonders of Honjo. These were weird tales of brief supernatural encounters, one of which was the okuri chochin.

The story of the okuri chochin tells of two drunken friends wandering home from their revels one night. Seeing a light in the distance, they attempt to follow, thinking this is a professional lamplighter leading the way to town. But when they get close to the light, it suddenly blinks out, plunging them into pitch-black darkness. There are several similar legends across Japan, sometimes with a lantern, sometimes with a set of clappers, but always leading travelers astray instead of to their homes.

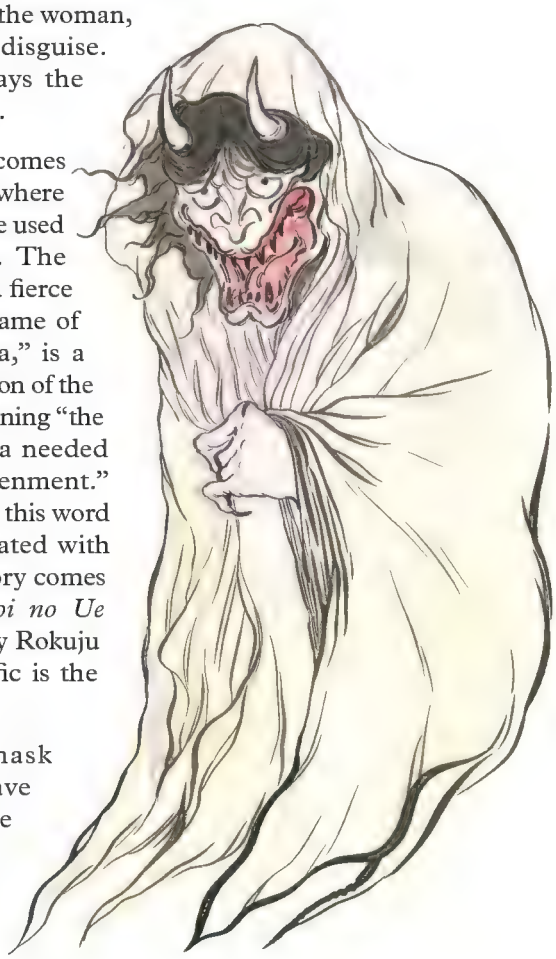
般若

HANNYA

LIT:
WISDOM REQUIRED
TO ATTAIN
ENLIGHTENMENT

Much like how Frankenstein is the name of the doctor, not the monster, hannya is the name of the mask, not the yokai. But as with Frankenstein, few people care about such distinctions. And so, the mask becomes the monster.

In Japanese folklore, another word for hannya is *kijo*, meaning "oni woman." Kijo are female yokai consumed by jealousy, rage, and other powerful emotions. One of the most famous kijo is Momiji, whose story comes from Nagano prefecture. The oldest known version is *Momijigari*, a Noh play from the Muromachi period (1336–1573) believed to have been written by Nobumitsu Kanze. In *Momijigari*, the warrior Taira no Koremochi is deer hunting when he comes across a beautiful, high-ranking woman and her attendants having a maple-leaf-viewing party. The woman lures Koremochi to drink and puts him under a sleeping spell. In his dream, a divine being grants Koremochi a sword and bids him vanquish the woman, who is a kijo in disguise. Awakening, he slays the kijo with the sword.



The hannya mask comes from Noh theater, where traditional masks are used to indicate roles. The hannya resembles a fierce horned oni. The name of the mask, "hannya," is a phonetic transcription of the Sanskrit *prajñā* meaning "the wisdom of Buddha needed to achieve enlightenment." No one knows how this word came to be associated with the mask. One theory comes from the play *Aoi no Ue* where the kijo Lady Rokuju cries, "How horrific is the voice of wisdom!"

The hannya mask is thought to have been created in the sixteenth century. It first appears in the works of

般若

HANNYA
(CONTINUED)

Shimozuma Nakataka. Hannya are used in Noh to portray the souls of women consumed by obsession. *Aoi no Ue* uses the hannya mask to dramatic effect and has made it one of the most famous symbols of Japan. (Interestingly, *Momijigari* was written before the development of the hannya mask. Traditionally, it uses the *shikami* mask, which lacks horns.)

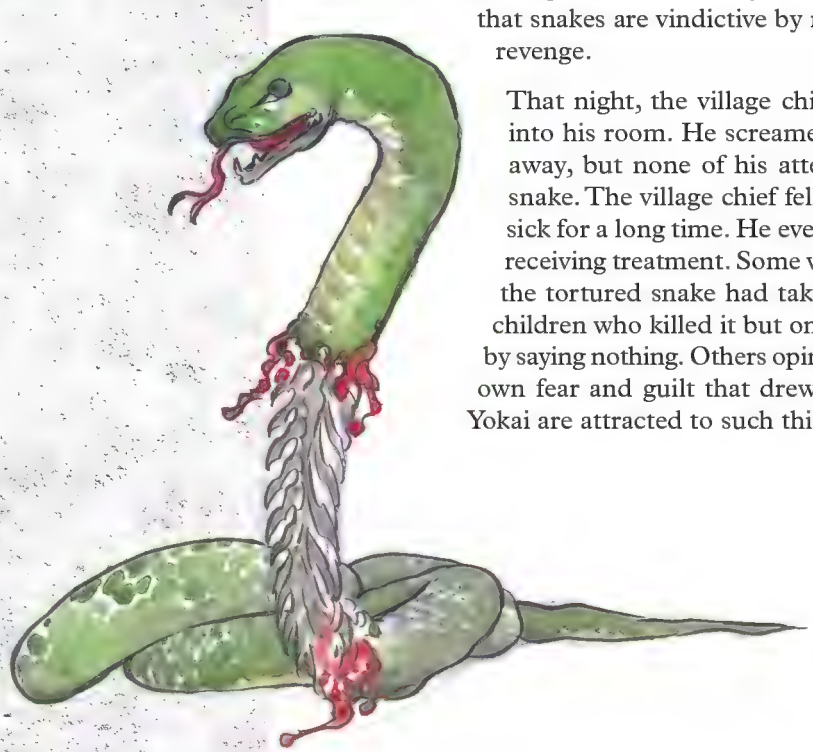
In modern-day Japan, "hannya" has come to mean the oni-woman kijo as well as the mask itself. In traditional Shinto weddings, brides wear a large box hat meant to hide their horns just in case. Swept up in the powerful emotions of the day, they might transform into a hannya.

手負蛇

TEOI-HEBI
LIT:
WOUNDED SNAKE

Teoi-hebi are the spirits of snakes who have been killed by malicious humans. They come from a story in *Ehon Hyaku Monogatari* (1841) by artist Takehara Shunsensai. It says that in the Toba region, a tale is told of a snake being tormented by young children. They were cutting it into pieces and skewering it. As the village chief walked by, he was terrified, knowing that snakes are vindictive by nature and would seek revenge.

That night, the village chief saw a snake slither into his room. He screamed and tried to drive it away, but none of his attendants could see the snake. The village chief fell ill that night and was sick for a long time. He eventually recovered after receiving treatment. Some villagers whispered that the tortured snake had taken revenge not on the children who killed it but on the adult who walked by saying nothing. Others opined it was village chief's own fear and guilt that drew the teoi-hebi to him. Yokai are attracted to such things.



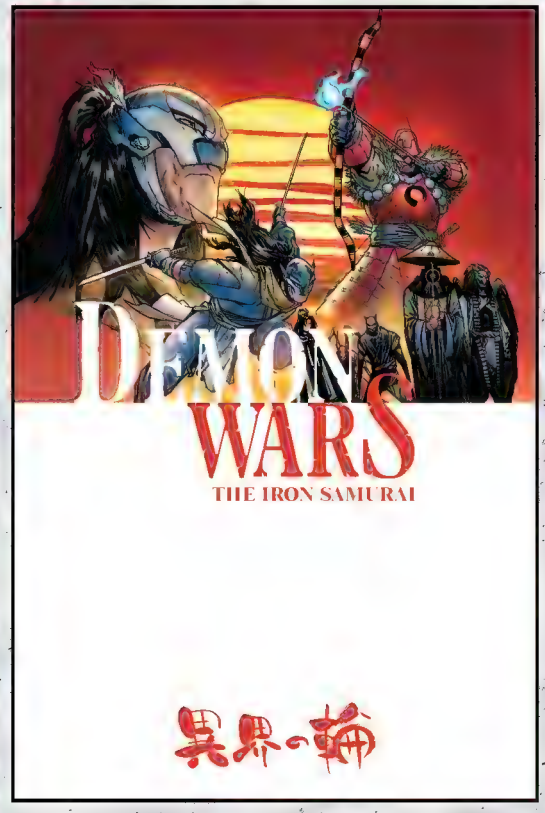
The Iron Samurai variant by
MATÍAS BERGARA

The Iron Samurai variant by
TERRY DODSON & RACHEL DODSON

The Iron Samurai variant by
GURIHIRU

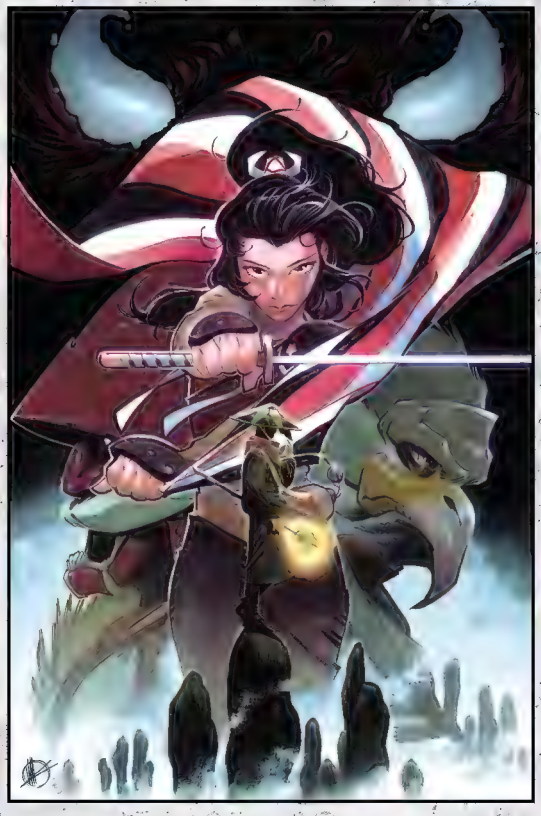
The Iron Samurai variant by
AUDREY MOK

The Iron Samurai variant by
PEACH MOMOKO



The Iron Samurai variant by
HUMBERTO RAMOS & **EDGAR DELGADO**

The Iron Samurai variant by
RICKIE YAGAWA & **JORDIE BELLAIRE**

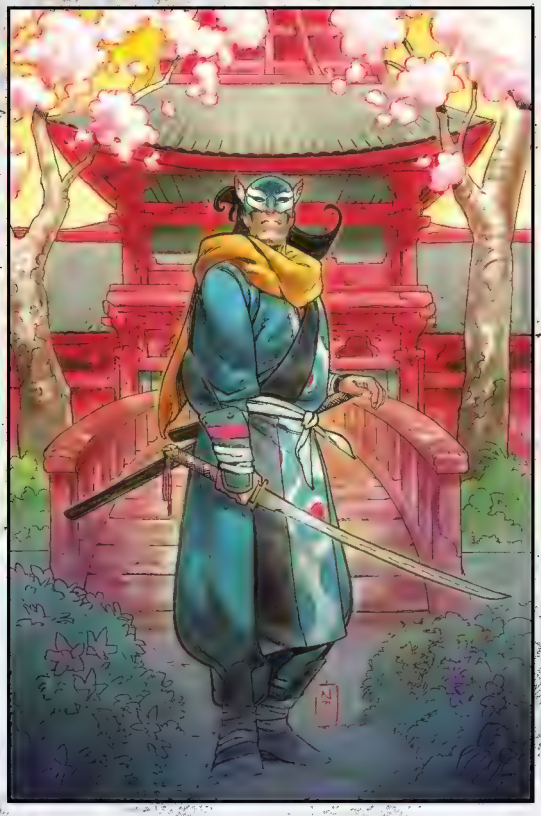


The Iron Samurai variant by
MATTEO SCALERA & **MORENO DINISIO**

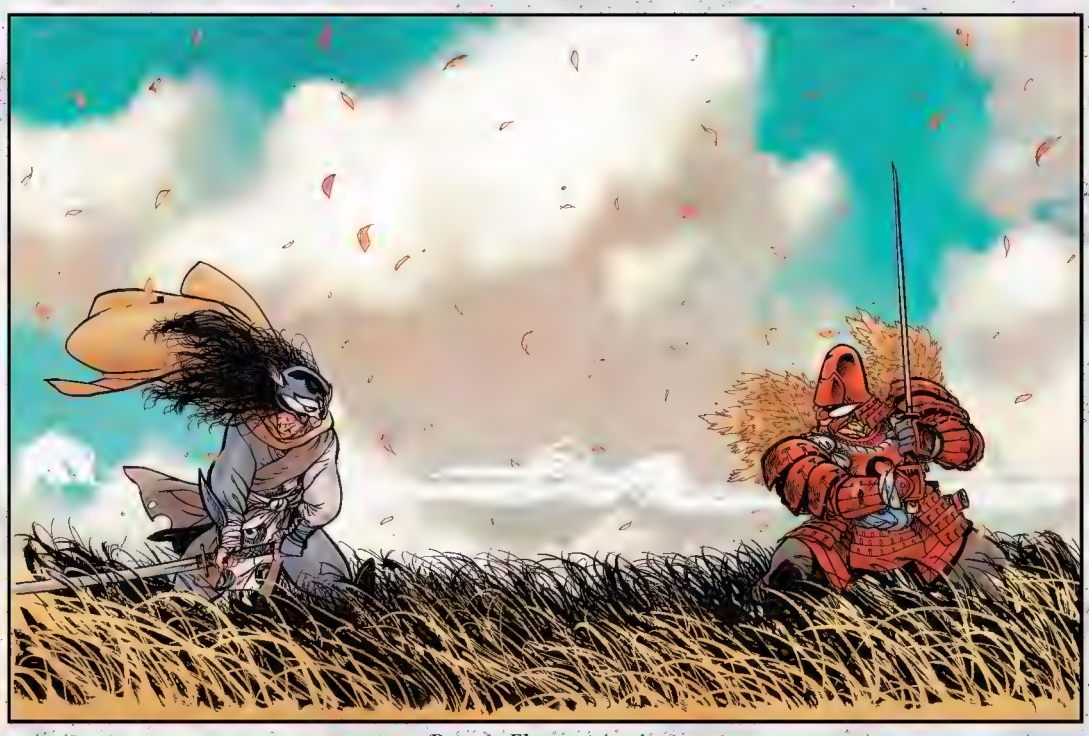
Shield of Justice variant by
GURIHIRU

Shield of Justice variant by
NICK DRAGOTTA

Shield of Justice variant by
JAMES HARREN



Shield of Justice variant by
NIC KLEIN



Down in Flames variant by
DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON & **MIKE SPICER**

Down in Flames variant by
CREEES LEE & **WOO DAE SHIM**

Down in Flames variant by
GURIHIRU

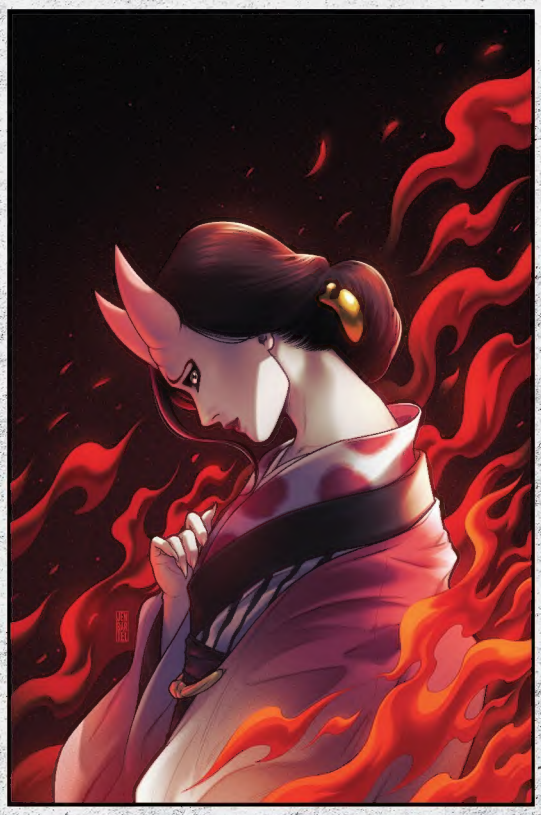
Shield of Justice variant by
PEACH MOMOKO

Down in Flames variant by
PEACH MOMOKO

Down in Flames variant by
DAN PANOSIAN

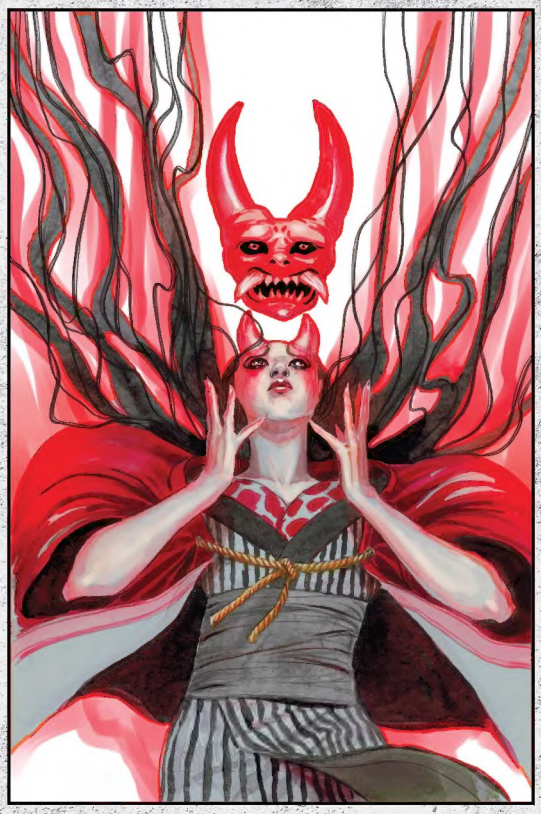
Scarlet Sin variant by
GURIHIRU

Scarlet Sin variant by
MITSUHIRO ARITA



Scarlet Sin variant by
JEN BARTEL

Scarlet Sin variant by
KEVIN EASTMAN & **FRANK MARTIN**



Scarlet Sin variant by
STEPHANIE HANS

Scarlet Sin variant by
PEACH MOMOKO

PEACH MOMOKO

TAKES HER VERSION OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

Welcome to a world filled with wondrous creatures: sentient samurai armor, a winged man in a falcon mask, a mysterious panther person and a red, snakelike monster with a deadly appetite. As these incredible yokai battle, will Mariko Yashida be forced to choose a side? When the Iron Samurai clashes with the Shield of Justice, their war will be anything but civil — and their cataclysmic confrontation could devastate the human and spirit worlds! Meanwhile, with the spirit world divided, Mariko finds herself caught between a fiery birdlike yokai and a club-wielding demon! And another yokai with incredible power has plans to paint the world scarlet!

COLLECTING *DEMON WARS: THE IRON SAMURAI, DEMON WARS: SHIELD OF JUSTICE, DEMON WARS: DOWN IN FLAMES* AND *DEMON WARS: SCARLET SIN* — BY PEACH MOMOKO.

異界の輪

THE DEMON WARS SAGA

"Pushes Peach Momoko's reimagining of the Marvel Universe into new territory."
— BUT WHY THO?

"Epic blend of heroes and folktales."
— AIPT

"Continues to showcase why Peach Momoko's Marvel Universe is one of the most unique and fascinating reading experiences."
— COMIC BOOK REVOLUTION

"The art style is gorgeous and captures the dreamlike state of the narrative."
— COMICBOOK.COM

"All the craft and creativity that powered the Demon Days saga."
— BUT WHY THO?

T+ MARVEL